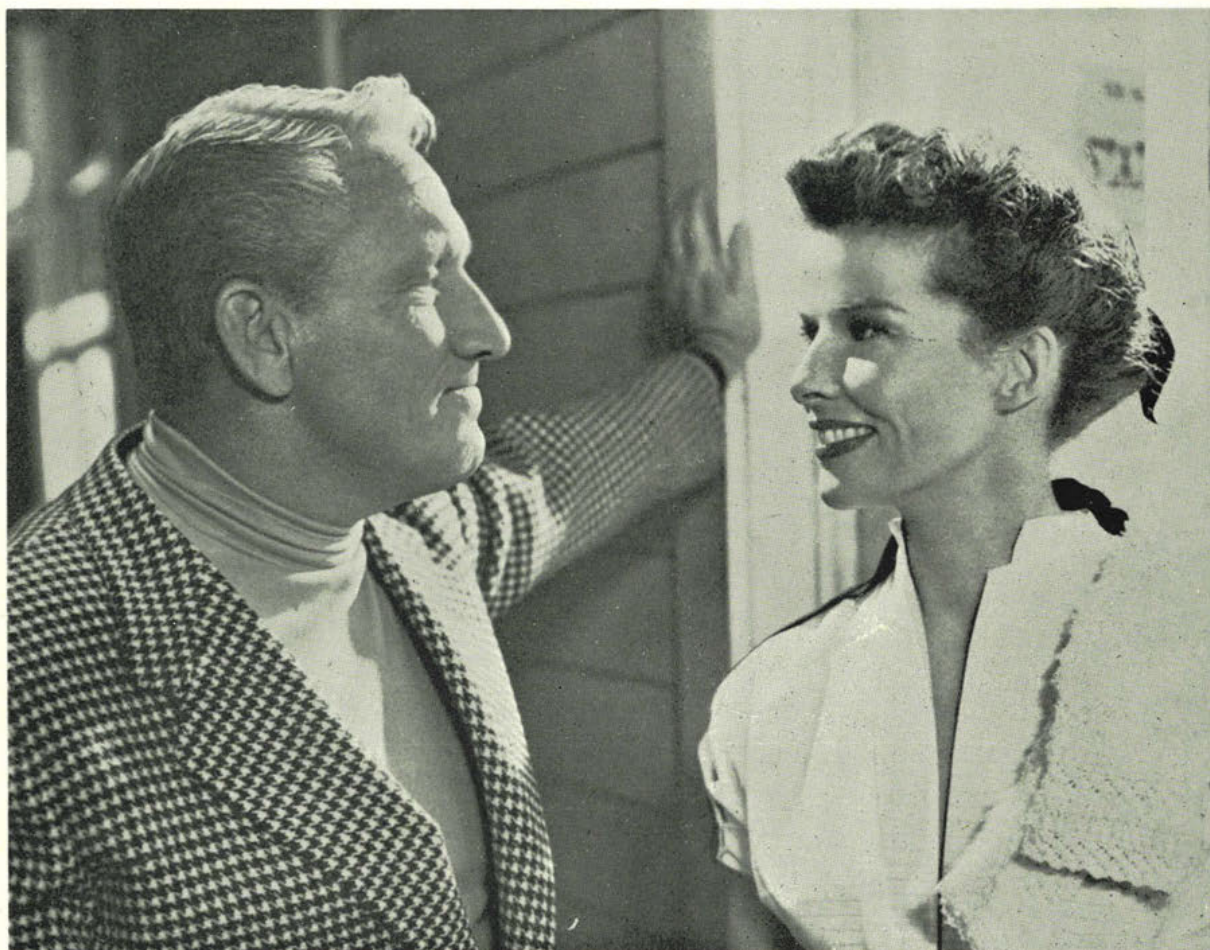


JULY-SEPTEMBER

1952

# SIGHT AND SOUND



3/6

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*This list has been compiled for us by the staff of SIGHT AND SOUND and we hope it may serve as a useful general guide to the principal films now in British cinemas*

**ANGELS ONE FIVE** (*A.B.-Pathé*). An episode in the Battle of Britain; simple, straightforward, conventional story of a group of pilots. (Michael Denison, Dulcie Gray; director, George More O'Ferrall.)

**BEHAVE YOURSELF** (*R.K.O.*). Young couple and dog unwittingly involved in crime; not very successful attempt at reviving the '30s style comedy thriller. (Farley Granger, Shelley Winters; director, George Beck.)

**\*BRANDY FOR THE PARSON** (*A.B.F.D.*). Fresh, unpretentious, leisurely smuggling comedy, with amusing situations, some good playing, fine landscape photography. (James Donald, Kenneth More; director, John Eldridge.)

**CAROLINE CHERIE** (*Films de France*). Or, What the Censor Saw. France's *Forever Amber*: Martine Carol's cleavage, tatty Louis XV beds, French revolution. (Jacques Daquin; director, Richard Pottier.)

**DEADLINE** (*Fox*). Newspaper editor versus gangsters; conventional story and background, fairly slick handling. (Humphrey Bogart, Kim Hunter, Ethel Barrymore; director, Richard Brooks.)

**DEDEE D'ANVERS** (*G.C.T.*). Efficient, conventional low life French film. (Simone Signoret, Marcel Pagliero; director, Yves Allegret.)

**DERBY DAY** (*British Lion*). Dignified upper classes, criminal and comic lower classes at the Derby; for sociologists only. (Anna Neagle, Michael Wilding, Googie Withers; director, Herbert Wilcox.)

**DIPLOMATIC COURIER** (*Fox*). Anti-Communist spy thriller set, mainly, in Trieste. Secret papers, beautiful spies, double-crossings; enjoyably expert hokum. (Tyrone Power, Patricia Neal, Hildegard Neff; director, Henry Hathaway.)

**GREEN GLOVE, The** (*U.A.*). Shabby melodrama with South of France setting. (Glenn Ford, Geraldine Brooks; director, Rudolf Mate.)

**I'LL SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS** (*Warners*). Musical (songwriter's biography) straight off the conveyor belt. (Doris Day, Denny Thomas; director, Michael Curtiz.)

**IVANHOE** (*M.G.M.*). Lavish and corny historical romp, based on Sir Walter Scott. (Elizabeth Taylor, Robert Taylor, Joan Fontaine; director, Richard Thorpe.)

**JOURNEY INTO LIGHT** (*Fox*). A parson takes to drink but is rehabilitated when he falls in love with a blind girl. Deplorable. (Sterling Hayden, Viveca Lindfors; director, Stuart Heisler.)

**JUST ACROSS THE STREET** (*G.F.D.*). Rather shopworn little comedy about a plumber who believes his secretary is a millionaire's daughter. (John Lund, Ann Sheridan; director, Joseph Pevney.)

**KONTIKI** (*R.K.O.*). Thor Heyerdahl's remarkable film record of his Peru Polynesia journey on a raft.

**KANGAROO** (*Fox*). Disappointingly routine story of criminal on the run amid Kangaroos; good backgrounds wasted. (Maureen O'Hara, Peter Lawford; director, Lewis Milestone.)

**LYDIA BAILEY** (*Fox*). Technicolor version of Kenneth Roberts' historical novel set in Haiti; vigorously staged. (Dale Robertson, Anne Francis; director, Jean Negulesco.)

**MAN OF BRONZE** (*Warners*). Biography of Red Indian athlete Jim Thorpe—football, baseball, the Olympic games, downfall through drink. Expert but dull. (Burt Lancaster, Phyllis Thaxter; director, Michael Curtiz.)

**MARA MARU** (*Warners*). Search for Chinese treasure: Errol Flynn again on the road to God-knows-where. (Ruth Roman; director, Gordon Douglas.)

**\*OLVIDADOS, Los** (*Film Traders*). Luis Bunuel's savage, violent yet compassionate study of young Mexican delinquents. An outstanding film. (Estela Inda, Miguel Inclan, Roberto Cobo.)

**OUTCASTS OF POKER FLAT** (*Fox*). Plodding version of a good Bret Harte story: people isolated in a mountain hut. (Anne Baxter, Dale Robertson; director, Joseph Newman.)

**QUO VADIS** (*M.G.M.*). Latest, longest and dreariest version of Sienkiewicz's much filmed novel about ancient Rome. (Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr; director, Mervyn LeRoy.)

**ROAD TO HOPE, The** (*Archway*). Rather pretentious Italian film about unemployed miners trying illegally to cross the French frontier: effective opening sequence, then deterioration into routine melodrama. (Raf Vallone, Elena Varzi; director, Pietro Germi.)

**SKIRTS AHOY!** (*M.G.M.*). Esther Williams joins the WAVES, taking her swimming pool with her. Rather uninspired musical. (Joan Evans, Vivian Blaine; director, Sidney Lanfield.)

**STAR SAID NO, The** (*M.G.M.*). Comedy about a television cowboy and an advertising agency; mildly amusing. (Fred MacMurray, Dorothy McGuire, Howard Keel; directors, Melvin Frank and Norman Panama.)

**STOLEN FACE** (*Exclusive*). Plastic surgeon Paul Henreid gives pianist Elizabeth Scott's face to a criminal and marries her, with unfortunate results. Silly melodrama. (Director, Terence Fisher.)

**THIS WOMAN IS DANGEROUS** (*Warners*). Joan Crawford goes blind, regains sight, ditched no-good man and grabs good one. Not vintage Crawford; for serious students of her career only. (David Brian, Dennis Morgan; director, Felix Feist.)

**TREASURE HUNT** (*Independent*). Amiable, unassuming frolic about eccentric Irish family, with Martita Hunt superb. (Jimmy Edwards, Athene Seyler; director, John Paddy Carstairs.)

**UOMO DAL GUANTO GRIGIO** (*Studio One*). Obscure, gimcrack little Italian thriller (1948). (Annette Bach, Romano Lupi; director, Manenti.)

**WAIT TILL THE SUN SHINES, NELLIE** (*Fox*). Cosy, rambling saga of fifty years in the life of a small-town barber. (David Wayne, Susan Peters; director, Henry King.)

**WHO GOES THERE!** (*British Lion*). Canned stage farce: ancient larks involving young philanderer, pretty sister, guardsmen, Irish servant girl, etc. (Valerie Hobson, Nigel Patrick; director, Anthony Kimmins.)

*(Films reviewed in this issue of SIGHT AND SOUND are not included in the Film Guide.)*

*Those marked with an asterisk are especially recommended.*



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# SIGHT AND SOUND

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JULY - SEPTEMBER 1952

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Guillaume Apollinaire

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Stills:

NATIONAL FILM LIBRARY for *Hamlet* (Nielsen), *Sang d'un Poete*, *As You Like It*, *Fashions of 1934*.

J. ARTHUR RANK ORGANISATION for *Importance of Being Earnest*, *Henry V*, *Hamlet*.

UNITED ARTISTS for *Limelight*, *The Men*, *Champion*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *High Noon*.

COLUMBIA PICTURES for *Death of a Salesman*, *The Sniper*, *The Fourposter*, *The Happy Time*.

ENTERPRISE PICTURES for *So This is New York*.

REPUBLIC PICTURES for *The Quiet Man*.

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *Pat and Mike*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *On the Town*, *Show Boat*, *Romeo and Juliet*.

R.K.O. RADIO for *Clash by Night*.

PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *Carrie*, *That's My Boy*, *The Stooge*, *Sailor Beware*.

TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX for *Snows of Kilimanjaro*.

WARNER BROS. for *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

COLOMBIA FILMS S.A. for *Le Plaisir*.

FILMS GAUMONT for *Les Enfants Terribles*, *Les 7 pechés Capitaux*.

FILMS SIRIUS for *Les Parents Terribles*.

DISCINA for *Casque d'Or*.

FILMS MARCEAU for *Othello*.

SVENSK FILMINDUSTRI for *Hindu Village*.

Material:

FRED ZINNEMANN and ARTHUR P. JACOBS for the "High Noon" feature.



# Oil

## ON THE SCREEN

A series of films, sponsored by Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, has been made to illustrate the more fascinating chapters in the story of the oil industry. Two of these films are described briefly in this notice. Details of the others in the series can be obtained from the Petroleum Films Bureau.\*

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# *The Front Page*

## **THE RETURN OF CHAPLIN**



The figure seems half Verdoux (the dapper waistcoat and trousers) and half Charlie (the stick and the angled bowler). It is Calvero the music-hall comedian, the central character of Chaplin's new film, *Limelight*, written, directed, produced by and starring himself.

*Limelight* is the story of an ageing music-hall comedian and a young ballerina, played by the English actress, Claire Bloom, set in Victorian London. Other famous film comedians who appear include Buster Keaton and Snub Pollard; and Chaplin's son, Sydney, also plays a part.



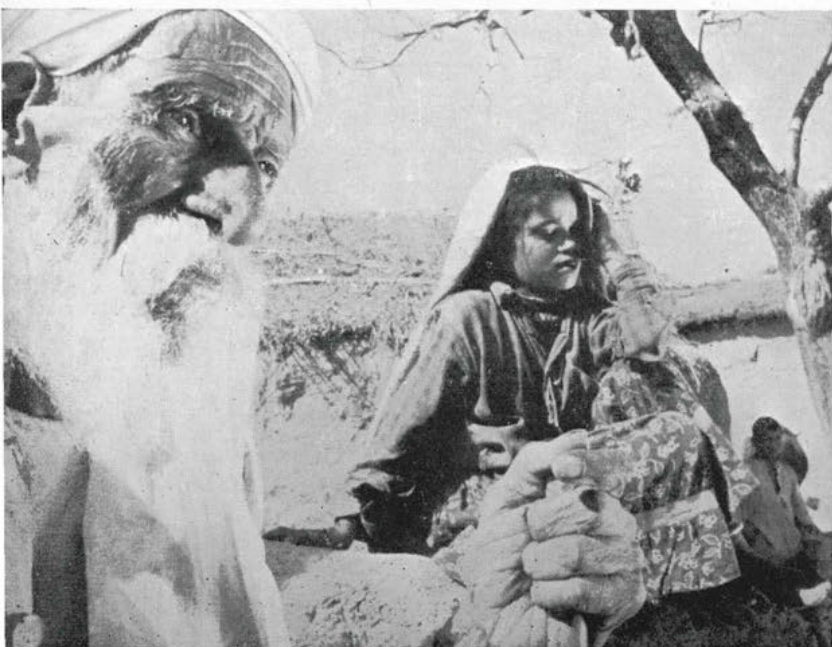


Paul Douglas, Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Ryan in "Clash by Night", from a play by Clifford Odets, directed by Fritz Lang. This is one of several interesting new productions from the Jerry Wald-Norman Krasna company. Others include a rodeo story, "The Lusty Men", directed by Nicholas Ray, and "One Woman", an original story by Wald and Krasna, with only one speaking part (Jane Wyman), an account of 24 hours in a woman's life. This film will be shot in one week.

### Italian Film Festival

The Italian Film Festival at the New Gallery cinema in London, which played for a week at the end of June, was a notable venture. It was, in effect, a commercial extension of something begun in 1950 by the London Film Club, which for two years running presented a festival of new Italian films in association with the Italian Institute. One hopes that the week at the New Gallery—arranged by Unitalia, the official organisation for publicising Italian films abroad—will have proved successful enough for it to be repeated next year; and that its organisation incidentally, will be more coherent. Several important new films were shown, which will be discussed in the next issue of SIGHT AND SOUND.

A scene from Arne Sucksdorff's new film, made in India, "Hindu Village", which was shown at the Cannes Festival.



## IN THE PICTURE

### "Critics' Choice"

STANLEY REED, editor of "Critics' Choice," writes: Readers of SIGHT AND SOUND may be interested to learn of a new experiment in publication by the British Film Institute. This is a monthly guide to current releases, in which the four or five best films of each month are chosen by a panel of critics, and extracts of their original newspaper criticisms are quoted. *Critics' Choice* is, in effect, an attempt at popular film appreciation; it is directed to that growing number among the mass audience which prefers the best to the worst that local cinemas provide, and which in remoter districts will have forgotten what the critics said about a film by the time it reaches them several weeks after the London press show. The panel, designed to be as widely representative as possible of current critical opinion, is composed of Dilys Powell (*Sunday Times*), Richard Winnington (*News Chronicle*), Josh Billings (*Kine-Weekly*), Jympson Harman (*Evening News*), Connery Chappell (editor of *Pictoregoer*), Paul Dehn (*Sunday Chronicle*), and Roger Manvell.

In view of a letter concerning *Critics' Choice*, printed on another page of this issue, it may be as well to emphasise that the publication is an effort to stimulate popular taste and to serve as wide a film-going public as possible. Its critical standards are purposely flexible. There are lean and bumper months, and choices necessarily reflect these fluctuations; also, the selection is limited, in its main choices, to films certain to have a circuit or other wide release. This is because only a fortunate minority has a continental house to go to, and films with a limited release have to receive less emphatic coverage. All the same, choices in recent months have included such films as *The River*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Singin' in the Rain* and *High Noon* (which hardly supports our correspondent's reproach that *Critics' Choice* is devoted to a purely "meretricious" cultural level). If people are persuaded to visit these films, instead of picking haphazard from the many mediocrities which *Critics' Choice* ignores, then its aim will have been achieved.

### The PEP Report

The PEP report on *The British Film Industry*, published in May, aroused widespread press comment. Critics mostly greeted the report itself as, to quote Fred Majdalany in *The Daily Mail*, "the most objective and thoroughly documented account ever written of the British film industry in all its aspects." The most quoted sentence was the comment that "the public . . . must be prepared for the Government not only to protect the industry indefinitely, but also to aid it financially for as far ahead as can be seen." Sir Arnold Plant, writing in *The Times*, found "such pessimism unwarranted," but most writers seemed to accept its gloomy conclusion as inevitable: *The Daily Mirror* announced that "The British film industry is dying—because too few people in the one-and-sixpences want it to live"; *The Manchester Guardian* produced a string of questions, suggesting readjustment in the share of box-office takings and the possible return to a renters' quota; *The Economist* asked whether the British public, given the facts, would really want British production to continue, but agreed that "both the main politico! parties seem to."

The press treated the Report, for the most part, as an opportunity to consider the trials and vicissitudes of an industry in a state of present crisis. Gerard Fay, in *The Spectator*, rather surprisingly stated that "since 1948 it has been learned, at great expense, that short of nationalisation the Government cannot successfully intervene in the problems of the film industry." Sir Arnold Plant seemed to query the Eady Plan when he said that "the scheme places a severe strain on the goodwill of various interests which bear the cost." Press commentators were not prepared to speculate on what will happen to the industry when Government assistance, as at present planned, comes to an end in 1954.

The trade press, on the whole, also approved the lucidity and objectivity of the report: *The Cinema* said "... we are no longer a private business—we are something in which the public has, perforce, a very great interest . . . the book will serve to inform those who glibly tell us how our industry should be run, but who at the moment show a conspicuous lack of knowledge"; *The Daily Film Renter*, making a similar comment, said that the report's "impact on public and Government opinion may well prove far-reaching." *The Kinematograph Weekly*, on the other hand, headlined its article *Was this PEP solution necessary?* and suggested that "the film trade may doubt the wisdom of placing before the general public so candid a revelation of its domestic mechanics."

For the rest, Richard Winnington in *The News Chronicle* gave a



characteristic verdict: "the reader . . . cannot fail to observe the emergence into supreme control over British film production of the chartered accountant . . . Film production is more than a matter of accountancy, and no 'solution' that does not as a first duty safeguard the film itself and its audience is of any use at all."

### John Garfield

John Garfield, who died in New York after a heart attack on May 22nd, was one of Hollywood's most gifted actors. He was only 39 at the time of his death, and it was only in the last few years that his talent had been able to develop in a series of films—*Body and Soul*, *Force of Evil*, *We Were Strangers*—worthy of it.

Garfield's rise, from a poor and lawless East Side childhood, via a child psychologist, a dramatic scholarship, experience with the Group Theatre, to success in Hollywood, illustrated—as his friend Clifford Odets remarked—"one of the most cherished folk-ways of our people." The association with Odets dates from the '30's, when Garfield made his name on the stage in *Golden Boy* (he had been playing in a Broadway revival of this shortly before his death); the Hollywood contract that followed made him a star but also "typed" him. A score of tough guy characterisations in tough guy films, most of them unremarkable, for a long while obscured the scope of his talent. The best of the films he made for Warners were, probably, *The Sea Wolf*, *Destination Tokyo* and *The Breaking Point* (in which he gave a remarkable performance); he also played with intelligent forbearance in a Joan Crawford picture written by Odets, *Humoresque*. After leaving Warners in 1947, he appeared notably as the Jewish-American soldier in *Gentleman's Agreement* and then, with his friend Bob Roberts, who produced for Enterprise Pictures, gave his two best performances in his two best films, *Body and Soul* and *Force of Evil*. These, with Huston's *We Were Strangers* and his playing in his last, more conventional film for Roberts, *He Ran All the Way*, established his qualities as an actor; forceful, with a vigorous attack balanced by real sensitiveness.

As a person, Garfield put up none of the barriers one might expect from a star. His own early life, his association with Odets and the Group Theatre, no doubt formed and consolidated his sympathies. He responded most eagerly to the directness of the American "socially conscious" school of literature, theatre and film-making; and he had begun, in the last few years, to take an active interest in production, to choose colleagues—Roberts, Abraham Polonsky, Huston—with similar sympathies. Last year he had formed a new film company with Roberts, and was also planning—perhaps in England—to appear in a new Odets play.

### Chance for Experiment

The news has been released, too late for extended comment in this issue, that the British Film Production Fund has made available £12,500 to the British Film Institute for experimental film production in connection with the Telecinema. A committee has been set up to select and recommend projects for production to the Governors of the Institute: the chairman is Sir Michael Balcon, and the members are Thorold Dickinson, Baynham Honri, Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat (as alternates), Humphrey Swingler, Howard Thomas and Basil Wright.

This important development fulfils many hopes that experimental film production, outside the commercial mainstream, should be officially encouraged in this country. The committee has announced that it is ready to receive suggestions from any quarter, and anyone with a specific project should contact the Secretary of the Institute. "Experimental" may be interpreted in either an artistic or a technical sense.

### Work in Progress

#### Britain

Carol Reed: Simenon story discarded: instead, a thriller with a Tangier setting, from a novel called *Bats With Baby Faces*.

Robert Hamer: *The Long Memory*, melodrama from a Howard Clewes novel; locations in and around Gravesend and the Medway estuary; with John Mills, John McCallum, Elizabeth Sellars.

Charles Crichton: *The Titchfield Thunderbolt*, a comedy by T. E. B. Clarke.

George More O'Ferrall: *The Heart of the Matter*, by Graham Greene.

Group 3 Productions: *Miss Robin Hood*, a comedy with Margaret Rutherford, directed by John Guillermin; *To Tell You the Truth*, a satire in which a national newspaper discovers a source of absolute truth, produced by Colin Lesslie and directed by cameraman Pennington Richards; an Eric Linklater story, *Laxdale Hall*, produced by Alfred Shaughnessy and directed by John Eldridge, who made *Brandy for the Parson*.



Gregory Peck and Susan Hayward in the film of Ernest Hemingway's story, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro", directed by Henry King.

#### U.S.A.

Hitchcock: *I Confess*, a thriller with a Canadian setting, starring Montgomery Clift.

Sturges: *Look, Ma, I'm Dancing*, from a Broadway comedy, with Betty Hutton.

Vincente Minnelli: *Tribute to a Bad Man*, a Hollywood drama, with Kirk Douglas, produced by John Houseman.

Ben Hecht: *Actors and Sin*, two-stories-in-one-film about actors, drama and comedy.

Walt Disney: two new cartoons, *Peter Pan* and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

Mary Pickford: *Under the Red Star*, story described as "highly dramatic and anti-communist."

#### Italy

Castellani: *Romeo and Juliet* (ex-Shakespeare).

Visconti: *Marzo Nuptiale*, studies of marriage, with Madeleine Robinson and Gene Tierney.

By far the best sketch in "Les Sept Pechés Capitaux", a film in which each episode is devoted to a deadly sin, is Autant-Lara's "l'Orgueil". Here is Francoise Rosay as a gentlewoman in reduced circumstances, concealing firewood she has gathered under her coat, with Michèle Morgan as her proud daughter.





People  
at  
Cannes

Cannes 1952

Photographed  
by  
Robert Hawkins

GAVIN LAMBERT writes: No festival can, ultimately, be better than its films. It is sad to report that at Cannes this year, though the friendliness and hospitalities—the receptions, cocktail parties, press conferences—were as admirable as ever, a formidable number of the films entered were mediocre or worse. Without enough good films, the atmosphere, the climate of a festival, doesn't come alive; the trappings begin to look pretentious; everything goes out of season. There were many discussions and explanations about the number of bad films, and out of them all perhaps one important principle emerges; that if a festival wants the best, it must ask for it. It has, in a sense, to become exclusive, to reject films if necessary, and though this inevitably raises complications, it is the only firm insurance against the kind of disappointment which overtook Cannes this year.

There was a general feeling that better films were available from several countries than those which were actually shown. Certainly the French selection mystified: an efficient, conventional costume piece, *Fanfan la Tulipe*, in which Gérard Philipe was miscast and for which Christian-Jaque undeservedly won the direction prize; *Trois Femmes*, three Maupassant stories uninterestingly packaged, the first work in feature production of an unpromising new director, André Michel; André Cayatte's plea against capital punishment, *Nous sommes tous des Assassins*, with a defence counsel's view of human nature and a stagey, desiccated style; and *Le Rideau Cramoisi*, a stilted and arty version of an intriguing "diabolic" story by Barbey d'Aurevilly, by the critic Alexandre Astruc. Three greatly superior films were not entered: Becker's wonderful *Casque d'Or*, Ophüls' *Le Plaisir*, which though in some respects it disappoints has remarkable qualities, and René Clément's *Jeux Interdits*, an interesting exploration of one of the strangest recesses of childhood.

Two of the American films, *Viva Zapata* and *Detective Story*, were skilful and empty: Marlon Brando's performance in the former was deservedly prized, and the talent of Gene Kelly impressed in *An American in Paris* (not eligible for an award as it had already been publicly shown in Europe). The British feature entries, *Encore* and *Cry the Beloved Country*, aroused only mild interest, but it was pleasant to see the enthusiasm of Joan and Peter Foldes rewarded, for their cartoon *Animated Genesis*, which though weak in narrative had some agreeable colour and design. There were dull films from Germany, a Swedish pastoral (*She only Danced one Summer*) with the unavoidable ingredients of a nude love scene, religious maniacs, repressed peasant women, depressed adolescence and pretty landscapes, and a grotesque Spanish version of *Parsifal*, with Wagner music, de Mille-inspired spectacle, and an apotheosis in which Parsifal is identified with Jesus Christ, Kundria (Ludmilla Tcherina) with Mary Magdalene, and the holy grail with the Communion.

The best things, which there is space only to note briefly, were Castellani's *Due Soldi di Speranza*, Welles' *Othello*, Menotti's *The Medium*, an uneven Bunuel comedy with some extraordinary moments, and a Japanese film not officially entered. Castellani's film, far and away the best thing shown (I missed de Sica's *Umberto D.*), is an exuberant, wicked and tender comedy, pitched in the style of *E' Primavera*, about a fourteen-year-old village girl's passion for a local boy and her determination, against all odds, to get him. There is a wonderful gallery of characters, all played by non-professionals—of whom Castellani's handling is second to none—and an exhilarating vitality and human affection. The two other Italian films were negligible. Welles' *Othello*, which had a very mixed reception, is as hectic and ruthless as his *Macbeth*; but the acting is better (though no more than adequate), and the visual style, the angling, the brilliant cutting, much richer. The procession of images, indeed, dazzles—the sumptuous Moroccan and Venetian locations, cleverly matched with Trauner's imaginative sets—and the whole film, with its enormous and dynamic invention, its disregard for human relationships, its substitution of superb visuals for a neutered text, is a characteristic reminder of Welles' undisciplined genius.

Menotti's *The Medium* is a beautifully executed transcription of his music drama, though with a rather stridently recorded soundtrack; one feels, all the same, its effects are more suited to the stage. The Bunuel comedy, *Subida al Cielo*, uses a perfunctory romantic framework and contrives some delightful things within it, notably a wild dream sequence in which the master parodies himself and the American 16 mm. avant-gardists, a comic mountain journey in an old motor coach, and a malicious portrait of American tourists at a Mexican fiesta.

Of the shorts, a very orthodox Dutch documentary about fishing



Left: (Top) Castellani; (Centre) Orson Welles and Mack Sennett; (Below) William Holden during his press conference. (Above) Dolores del Rio and Anatol Litvak. (Below) Gene and Mrs. Kelly (Betsy Blair) making a rather "Singin' in the Rain" entrance to the "American in Paris" show.





boats, *Shoot the Nets*, won the prize. But there were better things: Sucksdorff's *Hindu Village*, an exquisitely composed and vivid impression of a peasant community; *Panta Rhei*, by Bert Haanstra (who made *Mirror of Holland*), a study of shape and movement in nature; *Bambini*, a touching Italian film about children's games and fantasies; and Paul Haesaerts' analysis of *James Ensor*, which employed actual recordings of the painter's voice.

The official Japanese entries were disappointingly orthodox, whether treating legend or (sentimentally) current family life. An unofficial one, however, by the director of *Rashomon*, in effect a transcription of a No-Play, *The Man who Walked on the Tiger's Tail*, was fascinating: little plot, much ritual, great plastic beauty, and a superb final sequence of a drinking feast.

#### THE PRIZEWINNERS

- Grand Prix International (ex-aequo) :  
*Due Soldi di Speranza* (Italy)  
*Othello* (Morocco)
- Special Jury Prize :  
*Nous Sommes tous des Assassins* (France)
- Special Lyric Prize :  
*The Medium* (U.S.A.)
- Direction Prize :  
 Christian-Jaque for *Fanfan La Tulipe* (France)
- Male Performance Prize :  
 Marlon Brando for *Viva Zapata* (U.S.A.)
- Feminine Performance Prize :  
 Lee Grant for *Detective Story* (U.S.A.)
- Scenario Prize :  
 Piero Tellini for *Guardri et Ladri* (Italy)
- Music Prize :  
 Sven Skold for *She only Danced one Summer* (Sweden)
- Photography Prize :  
 Gohei Sugijama for *Story of Genji* (Japan)
- Best Short Film Prize :  
*Shoot the Nets* (Holland)
- Special Short Film Prize :  
*Hindu Village* (Sweden)
- Special Documentary Prize :  
*Groenland* (France)
- Diploma for the best Selection :  
 Italy for *Due Soldi di Speranza*, *Umberto D.*, *Il Cappotto* and *Guardri et Ladri*
- Special Colour Prize :  
*Animated Genesis* (G.B.)
- Special Mention :  
*Le Rideau Cramoisi* (France) and Dutch short film production.

#### The 6th Edinburgh Festival

NORMAN WILSON, one of the organisers of the Edinburgh Film Festival since its foundation in 1947, writes:

In the round of international film festivals Edinburgh is distinct in several different ways. To begin with, it is non-competitive. Despite pressure from various quarters to introduce awards, the



The young lovers of Castellani's "*Due Soldi di Speranza*".

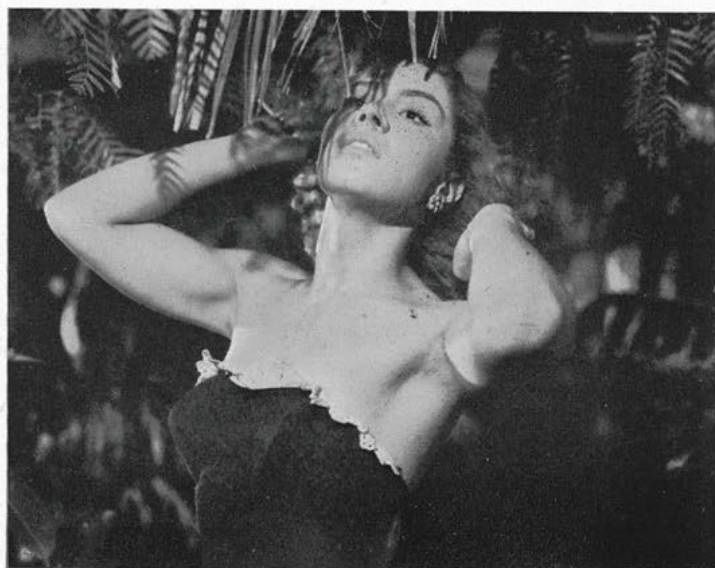
organisers have held firm to the conviction that selection is its own reward. The growing number of entries each year makes selection more rigorous and the certificate issued to every film accepted for public exhibition is now regarded as a testimonial of considerable value.

A more important distinction, however, is Edinburgh's devotion to the genre film. Originally founded as a festival of documentary films, its basis has been extended to include realist, documentary and experimental production. While this cuts out the ordinary commercial entertainment film it does not exclude all studio productions. A film may be realist in approach and technique though made largely within the four walls of a studio, and, of course, it can be wholly experimental. So it has been possible for the selection committee to include, for instance, in last year's Festival such widely different features as Alexander Mackendrick's *The Man in the White Suit* and Malaparte's *Il Cristo Proibito*, Paul Rotha's *No Resting Place* and Marcel Carné's *Juliette ou la Clef des Songes*, Rossellini's *Francis, God's Jester* and Piriev's *Kuban Cossacks*.

It is significant that many of the features are a direct outcome of the development of the documentary movement. The drama that is inherent in real life, not only in distant places but on our own doorstep, the tensions set up by social and economic changes, the impact of politics on ordinary people, the conflict of the individual against the impersonal forces of a rapidly changing world—these, and a thousand and one aspects of the human story, are now the material for adventurous feature film-makers. But if the dynamic tradition of the realists has brought a new vigour into feature film-making, there has been a growing feeling in recent years that documentary proper has been declining. The general standard of informational and instructional films has been technically high; but while most of the documentaries do their job competently and adequately, how few of them fire the imagination or touch the emotions—how few possess the electrifying sense of *revelation*.

The great justification of Edinburgh will be if, by having brought together over the past five years the films and the film-makers of all countries, a new assessment of the task and the meaning of documentary emerges.

(continued on page 45)



Bunuel's new film, "*Subida al Cielo*".





"Le Sang d'un Poète," Cocteau's first film. Lee Miller.

## CONVERSATIONS

Jean Cocteau

*Asked recently by his friend André Fraigneau for a book on the cinema, Jean Cocteau decided that instead of writing anything about films he would talk about them. He preferred the spontaneity of conversation; and the book, *Entretiens autour du Cinématographe*, edited by Fraigneau (Editions André Bonne, Paris) takes the form of a series of questions and answers, an extended and informal interview, in which Cocteau makes some general observations on the cinema, and on his own work in particular. It is a few excerpts from this book which are printed here.*

*To me the cinema is a means of expression like any other. Talking about it will set me off on various roads . . . Film-making is not my profession. I mean that I'm not obliged to make film after film, to find actors for parts, and vice versa . . . The drama of film-making is that it demands immediate success. A terrible handicap, and an almost insoluble one, comes from the enormous expense of making a film, and the need for corresponding receipts. The Muse of Cinema is too rich, too easily ruined by a single blow.*

### Making Films

**Cocteau:** Film-making demands syntax. This syntax can only be obtained by continuity, by the impact of shots upon each other. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that one's own particular syntax (one's style) will translate into a visual language, and that it disconcerts an audience accustomed to scrambled translations and newspaper articles. Translated into images, Montaigne's admirable language would be as difficult for this audience to watch as it is for them to read.

My first concern in a film is to make sure that the images don't flow, to oppose, match and join them without harming their design, their particular relief. Now, it is this deplorable *flow* that film critics always call "cinema", and that they take for style. They are always remarking that a film may be good, but "it isn't

cinema", or that a film lacks beauty but "it's cinema", and so on. This confines film-making to nothing more than a distraction, instead of allowing it to be a vehicle of thought. It leads our pontiffs to condemn in two hours and fifty lines a work which may be the fruit of twenty years' work and experience.

**Fraigneau:** I can well understand now how interesting you must have found the discovery, at a certain moment in your career, of the cinema as a vehicle of thought. But did you find a greater liberty with this new medium?

**Cocteau:** No. Even if one's free to make what one wants, there are, alas, too many powerful factors (finance, censorship, responsibility towards artists who agree to postpone their salaries), to let me consider myself really free.

I'm not speaking of actual concessions, but of a sense of responsibility which controls and curbs us indirectly. I was only completely free for *Le Sang d'un Poète*, because it was a private commission (from the Vicomte de Noailles, who also sponsored Bunuel's *L'Âge d'Or*), and because I was quite unaware then of the craft of film-making. I had to invent it for my own purposes, to use it like a draughtsman dipping his finger in indian ink for the first time and trying it on a sheet of paper. Charles de Noailles had commissioned a *cartoon* from me. I soon realised that cartoons involved a technique and resources at that time unknown in France. So I proposed instead to make a film with as much freedom as a cartoon, choosing faces and places that, one might say, corresponded to the freedom that a draughtsman would find when inventing his own world. I can even say that chance, or what one calls chance (and it never really is that, for people hypnotised by their work), often helped me. Not forgetting, either, incidents in the studio—where they thought me mad—of which I'll give you an example. I was finishing *Le Sang d'un Poète*. Somebody ordered the cleaners to start sweeping up the studio during our final shooting. I was about to complain, but my cameraman (Périnal) implored me not to do anything. He had just realised that the beauty of the images came from the arc lights shining through the dust raised by the cleaners . . .

**Fraigneau:** When, coming from another world, you discovered this world of the cinema, what struck you as offering something particularly new?

**Cocteau:** My great discovery was that film-making is the refuge of the artisan. In general, the artisan is considered the aristocrat of workers. People are trying to abolish him. On a film set, the unit is like a group of artisans in the strictest sense of the term, above all in France. The impossible becomes possible, through the *genius* (in the Stendhalian sense) of the French worker, who will persist in a losing venture and always discover a workable solution. Lack of materials helps this genius to survive, at a time when it is fast disappearing. So, a film set is the last refuge of feudalism, where one person works like four for the master; the master not taking on an imperialist aspect, but becoming a *companion* (as he was called when the great cathedrals were being built), who works as hard as they do . . . I don't know any director who doesn't say, when speaking of his unit: "It's the best I ever had . . ."

### Les Parents Terribles

**Cocteau:** I wanted to do three things. First, to record the performances of some incomparable artists; second, to walk about among them and look at them close to, instead of from a distance, on a stage; third, to put my eye to the keyhole and surprise my little ones with an objective telescope. I don't know whether I'm wrong, but it seems to me that instead of extending the play, as I did in *L'Aigle à Deux Têtes*, I assembled it more tightly, concentrated it, and cut out many actors' "traditions"—the "Ah's!" and "Oh's!" the mannerisms and repetitions inevitable in the theatre . . .

While walking about the rooms, I preserved the claustrophobic atmosphere of the play. I showed the stormy corridors which haunted my childhood, the corridors that were streets for families that never went out of doors . . . My five actors were like Hans Andersen's winds, buffeting each other in a cave. I think, even, that the perfection of their playing constrained the praise they received, the debt I owe them. Madame de Bray threw herself unhesitatingly into a medium which seems so contrary to her own disorderliness. It is incredible to think she sacrificed nothing to it, and that a few minutes were enough to make her understand that you only move in a film studio by following chalk lines. I might say that I put this lion in a cage, and her electricity only crackled with more force. The same difficulty was not present with Madame



Dorziat, whose efficiency in the storm is unlimited. I begged Marcel André to break with the bad habit of *farniente* film acting, and not to moderate his gestures . . . Mademoiselle Josette Day, whose beauty handicaps her so far as our critics are concerned, was perfect in her discretion and reserve. She was a bird among hunters. If I keep Jean Marais for the last, it's because his performance escapes analysis. Not only is it prodigious; he *played* what he used to execute, instinctively, and tripled his effects by a fusion of passion and style . . .

*Les Parents Terribles* is not a realistic film, for I've never known a living family like that. It is the most imaginary picture possible. I invented this family from top to toe because it pleased me, when I wrote it, to create a tragi-comic mixture and lead my characters, through a vaudeville intrigue, into situations which Roger Lannes has compared to an outbreak of fire, when everybody trying to get away is crushed in the door. The idea of realism can only be imprinted on the minds of our pontiffs by showing them real streets, well known places. Then they call "neo-realist" the films in which our Italian friends have shown an imagination comparable to the Arabian story-tellers'. Just as Haroun-el-Raschid disguised himself to uncover secrets, so they disguise themselves as cameras to penetrate poor places, go up and down staircases, along pavements—in brief, to uncover the smallest details of adventures as odd and unreal as those in a dream. This is a reason why I insisted, during *Les Parents Terribles*, that the episodes must not lose their theatrical fascination in order to achieve the fascination of a film. It was a question, I repeat, of tightening, contracting, assembling, without falling into the kind of realism that anything not in period costume usually assumes today. For me, and without the shadow of a paradox, *La Belle et la Bête*, *L'Aigle à Deux Têtes* and *Orphée* are realistic in the same sense as *Les Parents Terribles*, for the excellent reason that any film is realistic, because it *shows* things instead of suggesting them by words. What one sees, one sees. And so it becomes true . . . Goethe has defined this "truth", by which the artist expresses himself (and even his lies), by contrasting it with the "reality" that may be only a flat imitation of what already exists . . .

*Fraigneau*: With reference to this truth, how one can place films like *Bicycle Thieves*, *Paisa*, *Domenica d'Agosto*, which seem to most audiences the exact opposite of your own work?

*Cocteau*: The most important thing, which few people realise, is that all men of a certain period, who are creating on a certain level—that is to say, who invent something—are bound together, know and respect each other, while their various partisans are setting one up against the other. Each time that Orson Welles, Rossellini, de Sica, Emmer and others, quite apart from Clouzot, Bresson and so on, come out with a new work, they show it to me, as I show mine to them—before whoever it may be starts to concern himself with it. But as we don't shout our affairs from the rooftops, naïve people place us at great distances, ignore the style that gives our works a relation to each other in spite of the disparity of appearances. I come back to something Bunuel said: "style is style, and in the end this breaks down the momentary confusions among works whose origins are made to appear incompatible."

## Film Music

*Cocteau*: Nothing seems to me more vulgar than synchronised music. It's another pleonasm. A kind of glue to which everything sticks . . . The only synchronisation I like in films is *accidental* synchronisation . . . I've had many effective experiences of this . . .

*Fraigneau*: But how, when music is specially written for a film, can you hope for accidental synchronisation?

*Cocteau*: I provoke it. Often Auric starts by taking it as a joke, but in the end he approves.

*Fraigneau*: How do you provoke it?

*Cocteau*: I displace the original music. I've used this method since *Le Sang d'un Poète*, where I displaced and inverted the music for every sequence. This contrast not only set the images off in greater relief, but it even happened that the "displaced music" followed the action too closely and seemed to have been specially written for it . . . In *Orphée*, where I came back, after twenty years, to *Le Sang d'un Poète*, where, in a way, I orchestrated a theme formerly played with one finger, I took the most disrespectful liberties with my collaborator. I recorded Auric's music without the visuals (with a chronometer) and placed, for example, the scherzo written for the comic scene of the return to the house over the sene of the pursuit of Maria Casarès through the deserted town. Better. I recorded Gluck's Lament of Eurydice, meaning only to use it for the radio in the chalet, cut Auric's music at the first entrance of Heurtebise into Eurydice's house, and then, noticing



"Les Parents Terribles." "I wanted to put my eye to the keyhole and surprise my little ones. . . ." Jean Marais, Yvonne de Bray.

that the first and last notes of Gluck corresponded with the first and last shots of the sequence, I lazily exploited this little marvel. A marvel that comes frequently enough to those who calculate only through instinct. The same thing happened to me during *Les Enfants Terribles*, when Bach's andante coincided, flawlessly, with the moment when Paul entered the hall at night and the moment when he went to bed.

Another disrespectful liberty. I recorded the drums of Katherine Dunham's group and superimposed them on the final orchestration for *Orphée*, pushing the effect so far as to cut off the orchestra sometimes and leave only the drums.

## Sound

*Cocteau*: The use of sound interest me as much as the use of images. On *Le Sang d'un Poète*, when sound and dialogue had only just come in, we exhausted ourselves with experiments. We built walls and knocked them down to obtain the sound of their final crumbling. In desperation, I discovered that the noise could only be obtained by crumpling together two newspapers of different paper quality. They were *Le Temps* and *L'Intransigeant* (one was stiffer than the other). In the same film, apart from the voice of Rachel Berendt, who dubbed for Lee Miller, all the voices were mine, changed each time. The conversations in the theatre box were phrases spoken by me and mixed into the track.

*Fraigneau*: And in *Orphée*?

*Cocteau*: In this film, the sound accompanying the entrance to and departure from mirrors was obtained by a tuning-fork, recorded without the actual sound of it being struck. I used only the sound waves that continued after the tuning-fork had been struck. (To be fashionable, I should say the undulatory prolongation). I have mentioned the drums. After the scene shown backwards in slow motion, when Cégeste gets to his feet in front of the Princess, I shot the whole scene in close shots, once on Maria Casarès and once on Dermite. But, preferring Cégeste's voice in the shot favouring the Princess, I placed the track of his voice in this shot over the shot favouring *him*, synchronising the lip movements. There are, alas, too many subterfuges of this kind in *Orphée* for me to relate them all . . .

## Orphée

*Fraigneau*: How did you manage to avoid the laboratory effects



which you call "picturesque" and dislike so much? How, for instance, did you make your characters go into and come out from mirrors?

*Cocteau:* Each time in a different way. The basis of our subterfuges was that, in the film, the mirrors don't count for anything except for their frames. We built twin rooms, furnished with twin objects, and if you watch carefully it is easy to see this, because everything seen in the mirror (which doesn't exist) is inverted except for a few little things—engravings fastened to a partition, a bust on a chest of drawers. I counted on the speed of things to overcome this. Have you thought that it would have been impossible for me to use certain camera angles in front of mirrors which would reflect the camera and the unit? When Marais Casarès pulls back the three flaps of the mirror, she obviously can't appear out of nothing. She comes out from the second room. A double, identically dressed, back to back, goes away from her in the opposite direction, and plays the part of her reflection. The amusing thing is that Casarès changes her dress three times during this scene (a black, a grey and a white dress), that my finances didn't allow me to double every dress, and that Casarès' reflection is wearing a grey dress while she is wearing a black one. Nobody noticed, and I insist on the fact that after we had shot the scene and seen it projected, it even took me in . . . Which shows all the power of false witness. Another thing. When Marais moves toward the mirror, and raises his rubber-gloved hands, a portable camera is on an operator's shoulder, and he is wearing a coat and gloves similar to Marais'. In this way I was able to move directly towards the false room (the mirror), from the end of which Marais himself approached, playing the part of his reflection. The gloved hands meet; I cut, and move to another angle.

### Space and Time

*Cocteau:* What excites me more than going over a work which cineastes already know about, and the thousand anecdotes inevitably associated with it, is to talk about space and time. The art of the cinema is the only one in which you can dominate them. It is rare for communicating rooms to be built on the same set, and rare for an interior to correspond with the exterior which it overlooks. It is rare to shoot in sequence. I repeat, you make your own use of a world in which nothing seems to permit you to conquer its limitations. This goes beyond the problem of painting, in which the artist is intent upon translating the three dimensions in which he moves through the agency of only two, for in the cinema this use of two dimensions expresses more than three, because it overthrows time—which is a dimension in itself—and one can say without absurdity that it works in a fourth.

In *La Belle et la Bête*, when Jean Marais and Michel Auclair enter the merchant's house after their archery game in Touraine, they complete the act of closing the door, two months later, in Paris—having continued their lives during this inadmissible lapse. Thanks to the magnificent American apparatus owned by Maison Pathé (there are two or three), I was able to shoot the scene of Heurtebise and Orphée in the ruins of St. Cyr. One of them is walking (Marais), the other (Périer) is motionless. One is in a vague and dead atmosphere, the other is greeted by wind and shifting lights. Jean Marais played his part at St. Cyr. François Périer his, a long time afterwards, at the studio on the Seine. *The glass shot* is famous, and in current usage. But for such a precise scene, in which the characters speak to each other and don't simply move together, it was vital to have a perfect apparatus. I wanted to go further, and show two Orphées during this image: one behind, the other by Heurtebise's shoulder. "Why", he would have asked Heurtebise, "are there two of us?" and Heurtebise would have answered, "Why, always why? Stop asking me questions," and so on. Unfortunately, a film is too expensive . . . This was another example of triumphing over our limitations, something incomprehensible to the heathen visiting us on the set. It's the reason why people who visit a studio are bored and don't understand what's going on, only witness something without punctuation and can never read a whole phrase.

### The Future

*Fraigneau:* What are you preparing?

*Cocteau:* Nothing. Perhaps I've finished. Perhaps I've unwound my ball of wool. Perhaps this is a halt. One must wait. I could write a play, a book, a film. But I won't. There are too many plays, books, films. To start working, I must have the order. This order comes from myself, but from a self whose aptitudes, whose mechanisms, I don't know. The self which is talking to you now is only a vehicle. As I've been ill, it is possible that the vehicle momentarily displeases this unknown Self. My role is to wait for it to decide. I had thought of a project which would involve only homage to a French masterpiece: *Britannicus*. To present Racine under a new light, to clean off its academic patina; I'm still hesitating. Sometimes a modest project, which involves all the same a good deal of fatigue, happens to excite our nocturnal factory and set it humming. Perhaps I was clinging to this hope when I thought of filming *Britannicus*. Perhaps, too, I wanted to record Marais' admirable Nero, and show him to a wide public in his best role.

I wonder . . .



"Les Enfants Terribles": the sister's suicide. Nicole Stéphane, Edouard Dermithé (on bed in background).





Two gigolettes: Marie (Simone Signoret) and her friend Julie (Dominique Davray)

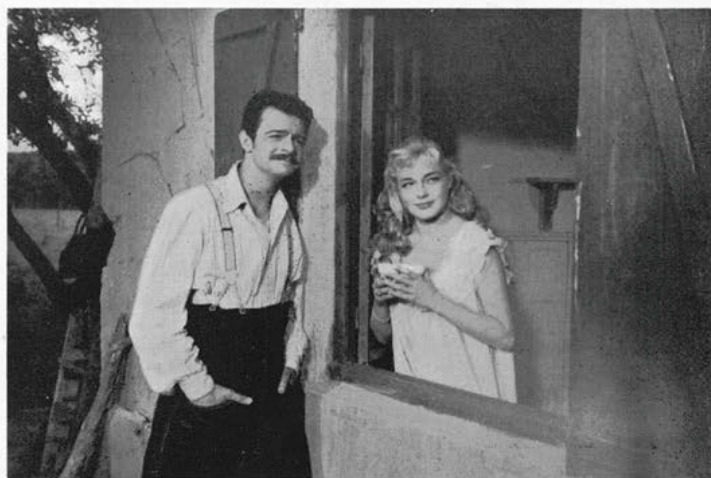


Marie and the apaches: Claude Dauphin as Léca, the leader of the gang

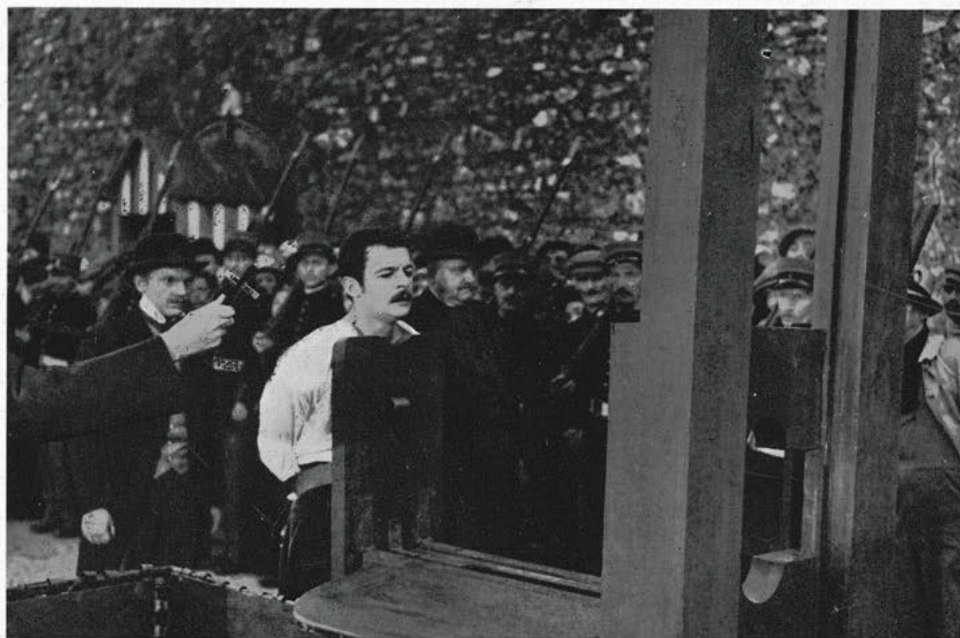
## Casque d'Or

An outstanding French film, to be shown in London later this year, is Jacques Becker's *Casque d'Or*, set in Paris fifty years ago. Nicknamed after her golden hair, Casque d'Or (Marie) was a famous gigolette who became involved with a gang of apaches; Becker's film, while it evokes the violence and squalor of this world, with its garish cafés, its petty intrigues, its knife duels, is firstly a love story. "Something between the painter Renoir, and Eugène Sue . . ." Becker has described the film. The arrogant Marie falls in love with a young carpenter; the purity of their passion strikes paradoxically across the general atmosphere of their surroundings, the other lives involved with theirs. And it does not survive them; by a horribly cruel twist of fate, Marie sees her lover guillotined in front of her eyes . . .

Superbly acted by Simone Signoret and Serge Reggiani, *Casque d'Or* is Becker's best film. It has the directness and intimacy characteristic of his work; there is a deceptive simplicity about the style, which is both subtle and gripping, sensitive and tough; the images, supported by very little dialogue, have an unostentatious and deep expressiveness; and the story moves, in the closing sequences, to real tragedy.



The lovers: Marie and Manda (Serge Reggiani)



The guillotine. Serge Reggiani





Welles' "Macbeth." "The time is free! Hail Malcolm, King of Scotland!"

## SHAKESPEARE FILMED

Henry Raynor

THE attraction which the plays of Shakespeare exert upon film makers is natural and easy to understand. It is not only that no actor can resist the appeal of the great Shakespearean parts, but that the plays themselves offer so much to directors, designers, cameramen. The willow grows aslant the brook; the east still glimmers with some streaks of day, but light thickens and the crow makes wing to the rooky wood; or there is husbandry in heaven, for their candles are all out. In the context of their drama, these visual suggestions, and the dozens of narrations (Othello's encounter with the Anthropophagi and the men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, Hamlet stealing the commission from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and boarding the pirate ship) mean so much to the imagination that one readily understands the desire to translate them into actuality.

Nevertheless, a Shakespeare play has not yet been successfully transplanted to the screen. Despite the freedom of the

unlocalised stage, which seems in some ways to foreshadow the cinema, the brief scenes that suggest close-ups, the unrestricted sense of movement that charms the narrow seas, the attempts have been doubtfully Shakespearean and doubtfully successful as films; nearly all have been, as it were, a concession to the middlebrow conception of culture.

From any Shakespearean production, on stage or screen, we require something that can match the author's sense of narrative. Every schoolboy is lectured on the playwright's sense of character, but the brilliance with which the incidents that present character are deployed is apt to be overlooked. We need from the players themselves that problematical thing, an understanding of the characters they play; we need, and nowadays rarely obtain, fine speech tuned to Shakespeare's marriage of sound with sense. The "meaning" or "point" of a Shakespeare play is not clear until we have all three.

Transplanting any drama to the screen involves adaptations and modifications, and Shaw's treatment of *Pygmalion* and *Major Barbara* is perhaps the best example of this. In each script, Shaw spread out the argument to allow for greater possibilities of movement, and made visible the offstage excitement of the society reception and the Salvation Army meeting. Other less distinguished originals, from Terence Rattigan's *French Without Tears* to Lilian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*, needed a similar expansion to become entertaining as films. So much everybody knows. The snag comes when we begin to contemplate any readjustment of Shakespeare's text, and are semi-paralysed by the potency of tradition and sanctity of the original. Yet George Cukor's *Romeo and Juliet* remained more true in text to its original than either of Sir Laurence Olivier's films, and succeeded in being inferior to them both as a Shakespeare production and as a work of the cinema; literal fidelity did not save it from almost every folly of which unimaginative simplicity is capable.

In making *Hamlet*, Olivier emphasised the fact that his film was an "Essay" in interpretation, and in doing so did much to disarm criticism. One does not approach it in the same way as Reinhardt's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or Paul Czinner's *As You Like It*. The first of these managed to run for two and three quarter hours and yet omit a substantial portion of the text; its rustics (Cagney, Joe E. Brown, Hugh Herbert and others) were quite successful, but its lovers and immortals were in the main miscast and spoke the verse appallingly. The settings and production style suggested that the whole thing might have been happier on ice. *As You Like It* did not attempt the scale and lavishness of the American *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; the heavy cutting of the text apart, it was a direct and simple transcription in orthodox theatrical style, with interesting performances from Elisabeth Bergner and Laurence Olivier, practically no imagination, and a Forest that looked considerably nearer Elstree than Arden.

Olivier's description of his own *Hamlet* makes it possible to be more lenient than we might otherwise have been to the oddities of Alan Dent's revised script. Olivier has plucked, it seems, the heart out of Hamlet's mystery. (His solution, one hastens to add, has nothing in common with that of Asta Nielsen's earlier "Essay," a silent *Hamlet* made in Denmark during the 'twenties, with its ludicrously handled *dénouement* that Hamlet was a woman). "This," Olivier said of his film by way of introduction, "is the tragedy of a man who could not make up his mind." There is sufficient tradition, theatrical as well as scholarly, behind this to make it irrelevant



Olivier's "Henry V." The night before Agincourt. "Upon the king let us our lives, our souls, our debts, our careful wives, our children and our sins, lay on the king . . ."



to suggest that the play contains subtleties hardly explained by such a simplification. Olivier has given us one possible explanation, and his film had the distinct merit of being shaped from the original to carry home that interpretation. But other mysteries remain: Hamlet's treatment of Ophelia? Let her seem quite palpably to be the decoy, and that becomes credible without making any suggestion that the hero is at that stage not only foul-minded but also pathologically suspicious. But why is Ophelia treated with such absolute brutality? It might at least have been made to appear that they were, before calamity overtook the Prince, genuinely and innocently in love. Then, "To be or not to be," transposed until after the "Nunnery" scene, becomes more understandable; Hamlet meditates suicide because even love, like everything else in life, has betrayed him. So that Ophelia's real madness springs, by a pretty touch of irony, from that despised love her father thought to be the cause of Hamlet's pretended madness.

Olivier's essay in interpretation was a painful simplification, then, to anyone who finds the character of Hamlet credible as Shakespeare left it: "credible" does not mean "consistent," for the Hamlet of Shakespeare, driven by events and by his own imagination to the very rim of sanity, is not, and surely could not be, consistent. Nevertheless, the film script, with its occasional modernisation and its insistence on one possible interpretation, is by no means the worst acting edition that has been carved out of the play. Furthermore, its adaptors knew they were offering the film to an audience largely inexperienced in Shakespeare, so that while an experienced minority might exclaim in horror, the bulk of those who saw the film would accept the Olivier-Dent version as authentically Shakespeare's. This is no bad thing; at worst, most people would have been left with a simplification that, whatever its flaws, presented something more dynamic than the cinema usually offers.

*Hamlet* had its unfortunate aspects: an Ophelia frankly discordant, a jettisoning of the flash and outbreak of the Prince's wit in favour of a rougher, more boisterous humour in the scene with Osric, and Olivier's unfortunate inadvertent impression of age. The acting was unequal and much of the poetry thrown away; the production style, with its conscientious attempt to be "cinematic"—deep focus photography, elaborate camera movement—sometimes muffled the drama of the narrative itself. Olivier's own speaking reduced everything to intense intimacy; one seemed at moments to be actually aware of his thinking, but by denying poetry he denied both the depth and the loftiness of Hamlet.

*Henry V* was an easier task. Either Henry was a precisian, legalistic and intelligent, with the orator's gift of rising to the occasion, edged into war by an Archbishop whose political schemes he unwittingly served, or he was a born and heaven-sent leader, vigorous, decisive, eloquent and dynamic; the text allows either interpretation, and Olivier chose the traditionally heroic. The transposition of speech and scene did not over-simplify or falsify the text, the brightness and fantasy of setting were a delight to the eye, unmarred by the half-realism of *Hamlet*. There were some jarring notes, like the misplaced humour of the Council scene and the Archbishop's tedious analysis of Salic Law; where Shakespeare is dull, it is better to cut ruthlessly than to play as comedy a scene with definite but outdated serious point.

Both *Henry V* and *Hamlet* had seriously conceived styles as films, unlike the Shakespeare adaptations of the '30's. The charge of the French knights in *Henry V* was unoriginal to those who had seen *Alexander Nevsky*, but it created the right excitement and was edited with a real sense of rhythm. The film as a whole sustained a visual flow and pace, though one cannot help feeling its progress from the Elizabethan Theatre to the actualities of the Agincourt campaign and back again, was ultimately a highbrow mistake, a confusion of





Two Hamlets. Left, Laurence Olivier in his own film. Right, Asta Nielsen in her "adapted" version, Denmark, 1920.

conventions. *Hamlet*, the bigger problem, contained bigger failures: it is difficult to imagine why exactly Hamlet's body had to be carried to the top of the Castle Keep for Horatio's explanatory public meeting, and doubly difficult to understand the absolute panic at the end of the Play Scene; the Ghost, challenging as it does a director's imagination, failed visually and aurally. On the other hand, Olivier genuinely explored the relationship of speech to spectacle in his treatment of "To be or not to be" by using the image of actual waves and their sound to suggest the "sea of troubles" in Hamlet's mind; the camera caught the tension of his first meeting with the Ghost, and that scene and the duel achieved an exciting rhythm.

## II.

Orson Welles' *Macbeth* confirms the gulf of approach between the Shakespeare films of the '30's and of the '40's. The earlier ones were "reverent" to the extent that they did not really attempt a style of their own: Olivier's films half bridge the gulf, and *Macbeth* crosses unmistakably over into "cinema" first and Shakespeare second. Like all Welles' films, it is exciting and adventurous, with a genius that is no less genius for being perverse.

Every attack on the great Shakespearean parts, with the possible exception of *Othello*, must as be much an essay in interpretation as *Hamlet* admittedly was; and if *Hamlet* himself contains multitudes baffling to the analytical mind, *Macbeth* himself is credibly and consistently three things baffling to the actor. We have not seen in recent years the *Macbeth* who was a fallen angel, the "noble *Macbeth*" whose integrity shines so palpably to all those around him, combined with the *Macbeth* who is at once nauseated and attracted by bloodshed, the poet *Macbeth* whose most poignant music is awakened by horror, whose stifled conscience raised horror upon imaginary horror in his mind. The finest of modern performances, that of Olivier, missed the poetry; Gielgud missed the wrecked nobility.

Welles, apparently unaware of these facets, seizes upon the most obvious factor, *Macbeth's* devouring ambition. His *Macbeth* is no fallen angel but a man of brute courage whose resistance to the idea of a cold-blooded and inexcusable murder hardly exists, one who for the sake of power will do almost anything. This *Macbeth* is no poet but a savage whose mind is at the mercy of every superstition; and this conception

governs the film. The simplification that results is rather more inexcusable than Olivier's of *Hamlet*. The idea of *Macbeth's* savagery is not un-Shakespearean, but the abandonment of his conscience and ruined nobility is.

The insistence on primitive barbarism is driven home unrelentingly. The almost Mongolian costumes suggest *Ivan the Terrible*, the castle is a catacomb, a place of black shadows designed for evil, water trickles through the roof into long gloomy passageways; Duncan alone thinks of its pleasant seat. Welles' *Macbeth* sees it from the start as a palace of horrors, and we cannot disagree with him. The Thane of Cawdor is beheaded before our eyes while burly, half-naked men thunder like African natives on drums. At the end, Macduff tosses the dead king's head from the battlements to the crowd in the courtyard below. An introduction places the story in the early days of Christianity in Scotland, and explains the witches as the servants of evil, superseded powers; at the beginning, the witches are moulding the clay figures of *Macbeth* which they are to use, to lead to murder with the dagger he saw as "air-drawn," to crown, and eventually, at the crisis of the fight with Macduff, to decapitate. This is exciting and imaginative, and the other side of the picture is presented by a "Holy Father" who leads Duncan's victorious army in prayers as *Macbeth* and his wife plan the murder, and who becomes, apparently, chaplain-general to Malcolm's army.

This is a deliberate extension of Shakespeare's work, but contains nothing specifically untrue to his conception, apart from the redundant Holy Father. In order to make room for it, it seems we have to lose the narrative of the Bleeding Sergeant, so that *Macbeth's* soldierly prowess has to be taken for granted; we lose much fine poetry, almost all the colloquy with Banquo's murderers, and, surprisingly enough, the actual sight of the Apparitions and the line of kings springing from Banquo. As there is not one actor in the film who can really be trusted to speak a nursery rhyme with a good accent and good discretion, the policy of excising speeches becomes more or less laudable. Welles himself makes sense of his lines, but he does not reach their poetical core, which is far beyond sense. As well as being badly spoken, the film is badly acted, with a badness that is almost an art in itself. The sleep-walking scene would have fitted better into *The Snake Pit*. *Macbeth* himself is kept alive and powerful by the sheer vitality of Welles, and the rest are barely worthy of a fifth-rate repertory company.



Just as all that is unsympathetic in Hamlet was glossed over in Olivier's film, all that is good, remorseful and heroic in Macbeth is omitted from Welles'. In each case, much that Shakespeare wrote has been preserved; it was Shakespeare, not Welles, who gave Macbeth an enlarged sense of horror; it was Shakespeare, and not Welles, who made Macbeth an insatiable murderer. Welles' mistakes in these particulars, and Olivier's, are not to be brought forward as criticisms of the idea of filming Shakespeare. They are, rather, the interpretative shortcomings of actors: not essential defects of the medium.

Welles' Macbeth is worse than over-simplified. He does not struggle against the idea of murder, he is only superstitiously afraid of it, not conscience-stricken. Shakespeare's Macbeth hesitates and then convinces himself of the necessity of killing Banquo. Banquo does not at once realise that Macbeth has played most foully for the crown. In the film, Macbeth becomes automatically King when Duncan's murder is discovered, Banquo suspects at once, and Macbeth immediately decides he must be killed. The slow process of the disintegration of nobility is not apparent; there is no nobility that can disintegrate.

It is only too easy to blame the artist's unsympathetic treatment of fine material on the fact that he is working in a new medium, and muddle-headedly blame the medium. But the crudity, as it must seem, of Welles' treatment of character only once appears as a corresponding crudity of cinematic treatment. The Banquet scene and the appearance of Banquo's ghost gives rise to what is by far the most unsatisfactory scene. Macbeth roars to good effect and overturns tables with a bull-like ferocity, so that the disorder is indeed most admired, but it is hard to believe that the sleek, cynically smiling individual on whom the camera eventually focusses is a ghost. It is obviously real and tangible, its looks are anything but gory. The suggestion that "chapel houses and our graves give those we bury back" arises far too literally from a brief glimpse of the sorrowful, walrus moustached, plaintively negative, long-murdered Duncan. The horror is too thickly mixed; it will not rise.

Like Olivier and the "sea of troubles", Welles roots the speeches in spectacle. The "dagger" speech is prompted by the waving of a dagger before the grotesque little clay figure the witches have made. But the text is handled with unparalleled ruthlessness. We are glad that the lines about sleep have been omitted, for so much of the majesty of Shakespeare's music is mangled, and we are sufficiently fascinated by the visual construction of the film; but then we find they occur after the murderers have been sent to dispose of Banquo and Fleance, after Lady Macbeth had told her husband that he lacks the season of all natures. We are continually baffled by the disappearance of lines that vanish only to emerge in some strange surroundings. It says much for Welles' skill that they always re-emerge, for his own purpose, relevantly, prompted by the action or the visual imagery created. But to watch the film with a clear memory of Shakespeare's play is to be infuriated beyond measure at the destruction of a noble and moving work of art. This film is not a performance of Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*.

Three plays filmed. Top: Norma Shearer (Juliet) and Edna May Oliver (Nurse) in "Romeo and Juliet," Centre: Victor Jory (Oberon) and fairies of the forest in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Below: Laurence Olivier (Orlando) and Elisabeth Bergner (Rosalind) in "As You Like it."







Contrasts in artificial decor. Left, the model of Elizabethan London for "Henry V," designed by Paul Sheriff. Right, a churchyard in Verona for "Romeo and Juliet," designed by Oliver Messel and Cedric Gibbons.

So, then, as a performance of a play, this film is by far a greater failure than Olivier's *Hamlet*. Olivier is as naturally a man of the theatre as Welles is instinctively a film-maker. The film which deals with human character presents its persons and their situations visually, what is said is nearly always of lesser importance than what is seen. If the crow making wing to the rooky wood is a matter of importance, the film must show the crow and relate it to the film so that its significance is independent of what may be said on the subject—dynamic, not illustrative. In the cinema, the poetic image is the visual image. The film *Hamlet* compromises with these essentials; depth of focus, the use of permanent set and deliberately stylised acting attempted, perhaps unconsciously, to make a film as like its stage original as possible. Few moments of the film are intrinsically of the cinema.

Welles' *Macbeth*, however, is nothing if not of the cinema; as complete a translation to another medium as Helpmann's ballet of *Hamlet*. The basis of the maddening textual transcriptions is not, as in *Hamlet*, the need to simplify a complex play, but an attempt to put Welles' conception of the play

in an entirely new form. He denies Macbeth's essential greatness of spirit, an interpretative flaw which could be repeated just as well on the stage. But he sacrifices the poetry (apart from the sacrifice to bad speaking, which is unpardonable but again interpretative) to the demands of the cinema. The play's imagery of light and shade—and Welles' has a startling gift for dramatic lighting—becomes visual. Macbeth opens the door of Duncan's room and a single ray of light crosses the bed; he comes over towards Duncan and blots it out. He does not need to explain that his mind is full of scorpions, for he has explained his sense of inferiority to Banquo while looking into a distorting mirror of polished bronze while we looked over his shoulder. The hands that will incarnadine the multitudinous seas are held out, waist high, towards a low-placed camera, and appear huge, knotted and ugly. It is strange that the most spectacular scene of all, that of the apparitions, is merely a passage in which Macbeth runs from the castle into a swirling, restless fog out of which the witches' voices, apparently omnipresent, answer him but show him nothing—not even the long line of kings stemming



Natural settings: a battle scene in "Julius Caesar," with Charlton Heston (left) as Mark Antony.



from the blood-boltered Banquo. But the witches' voices' repeating their warnings more and more shrilly, quickly and more quickly, at shorter and shorter intervals, are an example of the cinema's legitimate use and artistic distortion of words. But, of course, if *Macbeth* is not to know how deeply Banquo's line has profited from his crime, his subsequent violence becomes the unreasoning wickedness of a man who loves to kill; this returns us to Welles' preoccupation with that mistaken aspect of *Macbeth's* personality.

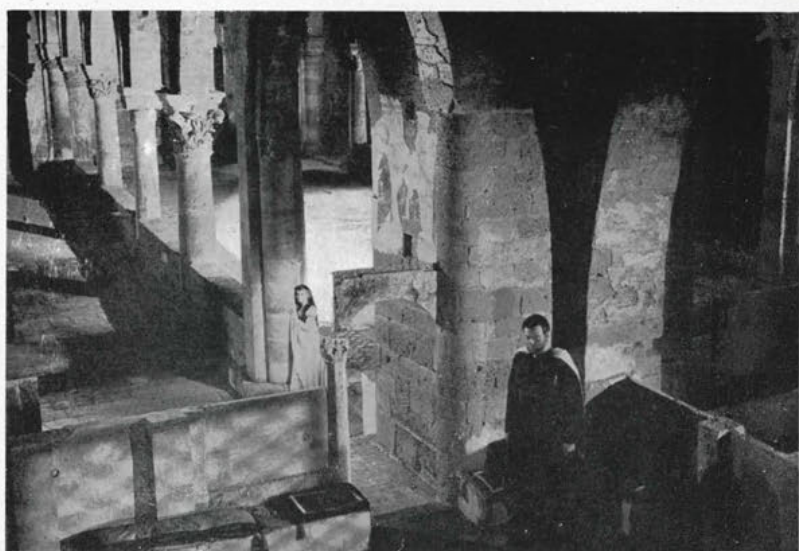
The other great visual effect, Birnam Woods coming to Dunsinane, the leafy tree-tops—for in spite of the prevailing darkness of the castle it is summer elsewhere; this is poetically true, and Welles did right to realise the fact—moving implacably above a ground mist, is unforgettably handled. Jacques Ibert's score adds to the effect. In watching it, one forgets the puerility, a moment before, of Lady Macbeth's plunge from the castle's height to the rocks below.

To the ardent Shakespearean, of course, this is maddening. The film is one made for any Shakespeareans who understand the cinema and can sympathise both with the director's desire to film *Macbeth* and with the almost insuperable problems he thereby sets himself. The Shakespearean without much sympathy for the cinema will see in the film no more than a blasphemous and impertinent attempt to go one better than the master. It would, perhaps, be less maddening for him if Welles could have seen the part as the majority of us see it, and if the general level of acting were not so abysmally low. But the truth is that whereas *Henry V* and *Hamlet* were films governed by an essentially theatrical conception of the texts, *Macbeth* is purely and simply a film; what is left would not make anything approaching an acting version for a simplified performance; it is, simply, a film script.

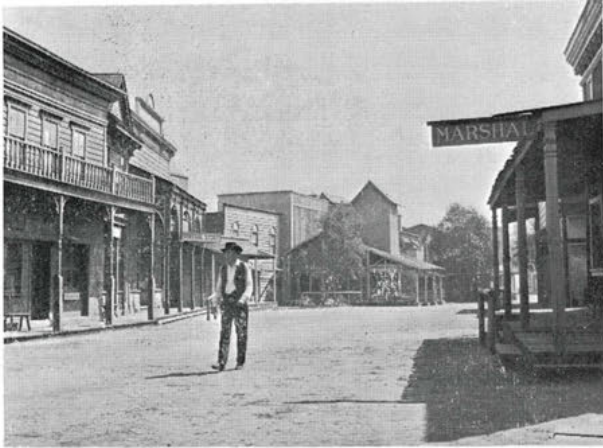
Whether or not this transplanting of a great work of art into another medium is a task worth attempting, is a different question. The failures to do so make us doubt it; only a success can, ultimately, prove the contrary. Welles has at any rate, in a crude, partial, exciting manner shown us something of the fundamental means of translation; and there are striking moments in a 16 mm. version of *Julius Caesar* shot in and around Chicago by David Bradley. The film is comparable to Welles' *Macbeth* in its free and often imaginative use of visual imagery and its bold attack; the text is less mangled but indifferently spoken and acted, with the exception of Charlton Heston's vigorous Mark Antony. The best moments—the murder of Caesar, the apparition of Caesar's ghost, the excitingly composed and edited battle scenes—show a strong talent for dramatic narrative in lighting, grouping, cutting; other scenes, notably the dialogue between Cassius and Brutus in the latter's tent on the eve of battle, are more theatrical than Welles'. An impressive feature of the film is the director's response to natural settings, the tall colonnades of huge buildings and the desolate sand dunes near Lake Michigan used for the battle sequences. As in *Macbeth*, the fatal flaw is interpretative; here the conception of the play is less distorted than negative.

Both these films, in varying degrees, show us the possibilities; neither suggests how they might be completely realised. We do not know if the visual imagery of the cinema will or can ever develop the power of suggestion, the unmistakable force and the subtlety of Shakespeare's poetic imagery. So far, in *Macbeth*, we have only had Shakespeare's play adapted and filmed by one whose imagination has not progressed beyond the stage of Christopher Marlowe.

Three scenes from Welles' *Othello*. Top and centre: Venetian palaces used as interiors. Below: a Moroccan location. Welles as Othello, Suzanne Cloutier as Desdemona.



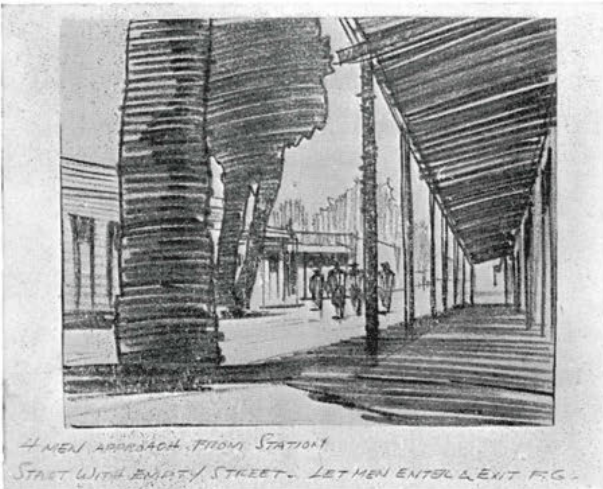




1. The marshal walking down the empty street to the railroad station—alone.

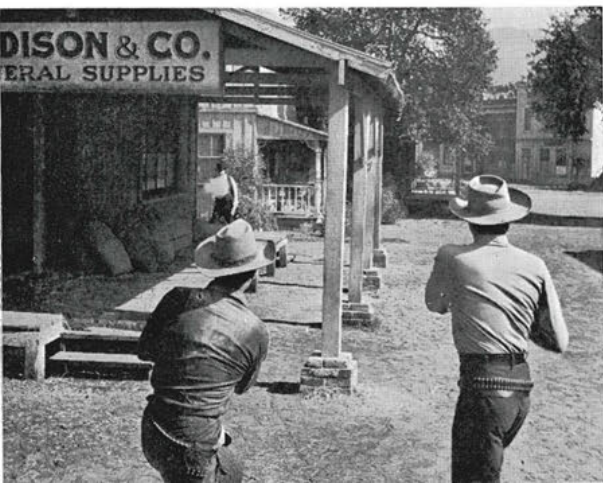


2. The outlaw and three survivors of his band are on their way to take over the town.



3. Sketch: The marshal and outlaws approaching each other, hidden from each other's view by a building. Marshal hears the outlaws, takes cover. Unseen, he watches the four men pass, then calls and . . .

4. (Below) . . . kills the first man. He escapes, unharmed.



## THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF A GUNFIGHT

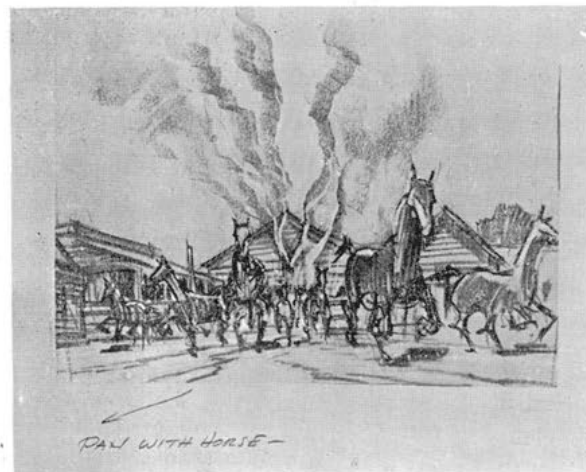
The entire action of the film *High Noon* occurs within an hour and a half on a hot summer Sunday in 1865, in a small western town. It dramatizes the futile efforts of the town marshal (Gary Cooper) to organize a posse in order to oppose a dreaded outlaw who is about to arrive on the noon train. The townspeople fail to support the marshal in this crisis. In the end, the marshal is forced to fight four gunmen all by himself. He finally kills three of the outlaws; the fourth is shot by his young bride.

The problem confronting the writer, director, art director and cameraman was to organize the material in such a way as to make the situation believable and exciting. These were the successive steps:

Minutes later, he is ambushed and almost killed; he escapes into the barn. The second outlaw, covered by fire from the others, dashes into the barn and fires. He is outsmarted and killed by the marshal. The two remaining bandits manage to set the barn on fire. Marshal sets the horses free . .

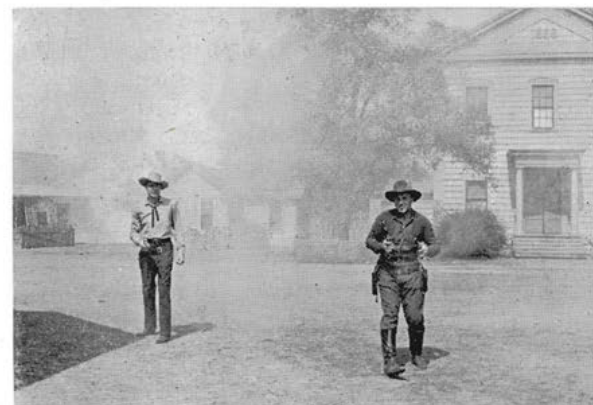


5. Marshal escapes, riding bareback.



6. Comparative sketch.

7. The bandits take aim . . .





**Illustrations from a sequence in *High Noon*,  
with text and captions by the director,  
FRED ZINNEMANN**

1. The writer, Carl Foreman, developed the sequence; this was then discussed in all details with the producer, Stanley Kramer, the director, and the art director (Rudolph Sternad).

2. The director and the art department then worked out a "routine". This, in effect, consisted of a series of thumbnail sketches which showed every shot needed and the relation of each cut to the preceding and following one.

3. After further meetings including the cameraman (Floyd Crosby), and the composer (Dimitri Tiomkin), who made an extraordinary contribution, the sketches were finalized and used as the pattern for shooting. Thanks to this exact pre-planning the actual production time was reduced very considerably.

The following is a very condensed version of the "routine", with illustrations from some of the stages.

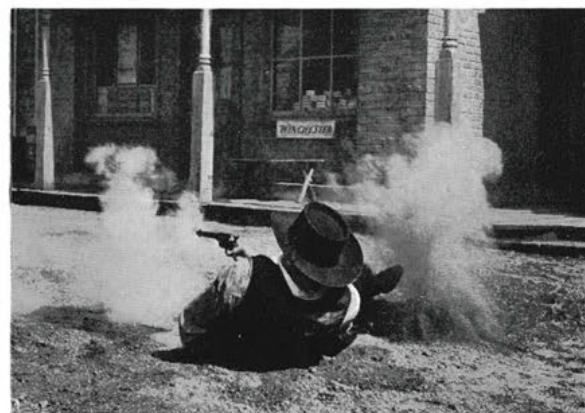


8. Marshal is wounded . .



9. Comparative sketch.

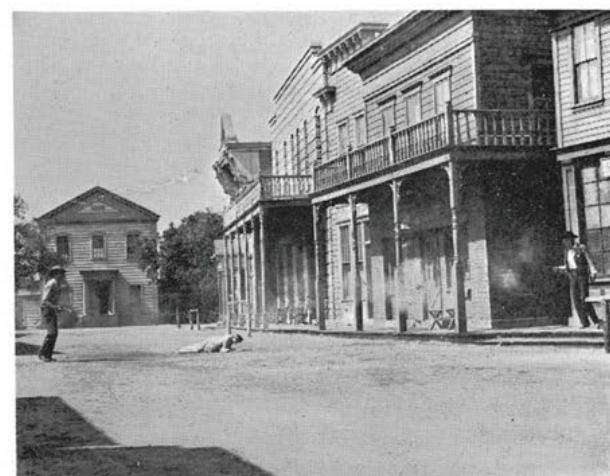
10. (Below) He defends himself . . .  
Then he manages to run into a small store, where he makes his last stand.



11. The third outlaw inadvertently shows himself to the marshal's young bride, who has been hiding in her husband's office. She kills him.



12. Sketch: The last outlaw forces the bride into the street, using her as a shield. Marshal obeys his command to come out.



13. Outlaw attempts to shoot. Girl stops him. He flings her aside.

14. (Below) Marshal shoots and kills last outlaw, and helps the girl to her feet.

As the townspeople come out of hiding, the marshal drops his badge into the dust and leaves the place with his bride.





## THE TEN BEST FILMS

1. *Potemkin* (Eisenstein)
2. *The Gold Rush* (Chaplin)
3. *Bicycle Thieves* (de Sica)
4. *City Lights* (Chaplin)
5. *La Grande Illusion* (Renoir)
6. *Le Million* (Clair)
7. *Greed* (Stroheim)
8. *Hallelujah!* (Vidor)

### 4 Films tied for the remaining places:

*Dreigroschenoper* (Pabst)  
*Brief Encounter* (Lean)  
*Intolerance* (Griffith)  
*Man of Aran* (Flaherty)

## MAIN RUNNERS-UP

*Passion of Jeanne d'Arc*  
*Les Enfants du Paradis*  
*l'Age d'Or*  
*Broken Blossoms*

*Foolish Wives*  
*Storm over Asia*  
*Birth of a Nation*  
*Le Diable au Corps*

## SOME PERSONAL CHOICES

### Claude Autant-Lara

- |                                         |                                             |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Potemkin</i>                      | 2. <i>The Strong Man</i> (Capra)            |
| 3. <i>Wedding March</i> (Stroheim)      | 4. <i>Dreigroschenoper</i> (Pabst)          |
| 5. <i>The Man I Killed</i> (Lubitsch)   | 6. <i>Peter Ibbetson</i> (Tay Garnett)      |
| 7. <i>La Kermesse Heroique</i> (Feyder) | 8. <i>Odd Man Out</i> (Reed)                |
| 9. <i>Senza Pieta</i> (Lattuada)        | 10. <i>Le Diable au Corps</i> (Autant-Lara) |

### Jacques Becker

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>The Pilgrim</i> (Chaplin)  | 2. <i>City Lights</i> (Chaplin)    |
| 3. <i>Modern Times</i> (Chaplin) | 4. <i>Foolish Wives</i> (Stroheim) |
| 5. <i>Greed</i>                  | 6. <i>Wedding March</i>            |
| 7. <i>Lonesome</i> (Fejos)       | 8. <i>The Crowd</i> (Vidor)        |
| 9. <i>M</i> (Lang)               |                                    |

### Robert Bresson

- |                                      |                           |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. <i>Gold Rush</i>                  | 2. <i>City Lights</i>     |
| 3. <i>Potemkin</i>                   | 4. <i>Brief Encounter</i> |
| 5. <i>Bicycle Thieves</i>            | 6. <i>Man of Aran</i>     |
| 7. <i>Louisiana Story</i> (Flaherty) |                           |

### Luis Bunuel

- |                                                       |                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Underworld</i> (Sternberg)                      | 2. <i>Gold Rush</i>                        |
| 3. <i>Bicycle Thieves</i>                             | 4. <i>Potemkin</i>                         |
| 5. <i>Portrait of Jennie</i> (Dieterle)               | 6. <i>Cavalcade</i> (Frank Lloyd)          |
| 7. <i>White Shadows in the South Seas</i> (Van Dyke)  | 8. <i>Dead of Night</i> (Cavalcanti, etc.) |
| 9. <i>l'Age d'Or</i> (Bunuel)                         |                                            |
| 10. <i>I am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang</i> (Le Roy) |                                            |

### Cavalcanti

- |                                         |                                   |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>The Girl I Love</i> (Charles Ray) | 2. <i>l'Atalante</i> (Vigo)       |
| 3. <i>Bicycle Thieves</i>               | 4. <i>Gosta Berling</i> (Stiller) |
| 5. <i>Brief Encounter</i>               | 6. <i>The Pilgrim</i>             |
| 7. <i>Broken Blossoms</i> (Griffith)    | 8. <i>Potemkin</i> (Eisenstein)   |
| 9. <i>Moana</i> (Flaherty)              | 10. <i>Dreigroschenoper</i>       |

### Edward Dmytryk

- |                                                      |                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Sunrise</i> (Murnau)                           | 2. <i>Der Letzte Mann</i> (Murnau)        |
| 3. <i>The Patriot</i> (Lubitsch)                     | 4. <i>La Grande Illusion</i>              |
| 5. <i>Give us this Day</i> (Dmytryk)                 | 6. <i>Best Years of our Lives</i> (Wyler) |
| 7. <i>The Kid</i> (Chaplin)                          | 8. <i>Little Foxes</i> (Wyler)            |
| 9. <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> (Milestone) | 10. <i>Regain</i> (Pagnol)                |

### Carl Dreyer

- |                                           |                                     |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Birth of a Nation</i> (Griffith)    | 2. <i>Arne's Treasure</i> (Stiller) |
| 3. <i>Potemkin</i>                        | 4. <i>Gold Rush</i>                 |
| 5. <i>Sous les Toits de Paris</i> (Clair) | 6. <i>Quai des Brumes</i> (Carné)   |
| 7. <i>Brief Encounter</i>                 | 8. <i>Henry V</i> (Olivier)         |
| 9. <i>Petrified Forest</i> (Mayo)         | 10. <i>Open City</i> (Rossellini)   |

# AS YOU

# LIKE IT

WHAT do film-makers think about the cinema? They don't, on the whole, make many public pronouncements, and when they do—as in the case of Chaplin's enormous tribute to *A Place in the Sun*—they can disconcert. Light has recently been thrown on the subject by the committee of the *Festival Mondial du Film et des Beaux Arts de Belgique*, who had the fascinating idea of asking more than a 100 cinema personalities, mainly directors, to choose the ten best films of the half century. The results of this international referendum were published a few weeks ago, and since that time the committee has made available the personal replies of about sixty of those questioned; they provide a rich topic of speculation.

The films that received the most votes, and a selection of the individual lists, are printed in an adjoining column. The committee makes the following observations on the result: first, that almost all the films chosen are "dedicated to the great cause of humanism. Human values are well to the fore"; secondly, that no replies were received from the U.S.S.R., India, China or Japan; thirdly, that several distinguished film-makers couldn't or wouldn't reply, among them Chaplin, Stroheim, Clair, Cocteau, Hitchcock and Olivier. Other names of which there is no mention (one doesn't know whether they were questioned or not) include Ford, Renoir, Pabst, Carné, Prévert, Ophuls, Castellani, Milestone and Lang.

The committee's letter stressed that personal preferences rather than historical or general aesthetic considerations should be the guiding motive, and one must assume that the participants followed this principle. All the same, various questions arise. There is, first of all, as Charles Frend remarked in his covering letter, "the unreliability of one's memory, which tends to add glamour to old films". Secondly, a film may have a particular quality of revelation at a particular time; this quality may remain in the memory, though if one saw the film again many years later, it might fail to excite. How recently, one wonders, had the voters seen, say, *Dreigroschenoper*, or *Le Million*, or *Man of Aran*?

Again, Clair, refusing to commit himself, comments: "I think that a film-maker is worse placed than anybody to answer the question. . . ." He doesn't say why, but one supposes him to be raising the question of artists not being the best judges of other artists' work. From an "engaged" position, the personal or even practical revelation of a particular film is bound to come up again and again; not only taste is involved, but influence, personalities, affection for or dislike of various creative climates which may embrace a number of films.

As it turns out, the list of winners does not contain many surprises. More curious are some of the individual choices. Who would have thought Bunuel to be so taken with, of all things, *Portrait of Jennie* and *Cavalcade*, or Dreyer with *The Petrified Forest*, or Reed with *Gone with the Wind*, or Kazan with *Target for To-night*, or Visconti with *The Lost Week-end*? Other surprises of this nature are that Michael Powell included *The Wizard of Oz*; Delannoy, *On Borrowed Time* and *Mine Own Executioner*; Asquith, *The 39 Steps*; Noel Coward, *The Guardsman* and *All About Eve*; and Dmytryk, *The Patriot* (Lubitsch). The lists which perhaps seem most consistent, and suggest definite lines of taste (preferences for approach, human or social territory) are those of Becker, de Sica, Hamer and Basil Wright; the most



baffling, those of Bresson, Bunuel and Dreyer. One notices how brilliant technicians (Kazan, Reed, Welles, Dmytryk) admire Pagnol's films, perhaps the attraction of compensating opposites. One is struck throughout by the relative indifference to Vigo, Ford (and then only the odd mention for *Stagecoach* and *The Informer*), Dovzhenko, Donskoi, Jennings; to *Le Jour se Lève* (*Les Enfants du Paradis* much preferred); to any Renoir except *La Grande Illusion*, any Clair except *Le Million*, any Eisenstein except *Potemkin*.

A distinctly common factor, however, is the number of directors who vote for their own films. From de Mille it was to be expected, although he only includes four (*Ten Commandments*, *King of Kings*, *Sign of the Cross*, *Samson and Delilah*) along with other biggies like *Ben Hur*, *Cabiria*, *Gone with the Wind*. More surprisingly, Autant-Lara votes for *Le Diable au Corps* (a modest tenth), Bunuel for *l'Age d'Or* (ninth), Dmytryk for *Give us This Day* (an immodest fifth), Hathaway for *Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, L'Herbier for *El Dorado* (just above *Broken Blossoms*), Dieterle for *Zola* (just above *Grapes of Wrath* and *Bicycle Thieves*), Vidor for *The Big Parade*. Others, more shyly, vote only for films in which they have part ownership; Noel Coward for *Brief Encounter*, Billy Wilder for *Ninotchka*. Vanity or genuine self-admiration? Or a simple desire to win? Here at any rate, film-makers of extraordinarily varied calibre are united, and one had better draw a veil, quickly, over the spectacle.

As for general observations, one is chary of making too many after the committee's own reservations on the subject. But one or two interesting things emerge. For senior film-makers, *Potemkin* was clearly the greatest revelation, and remains the key-film; here, one feels, the time factor tells—this was the first of the great Russian films to make an outside impact, and it has stayed most strongly in the memory, though one can think of other Russian films, not only by Eisenstein, of greater dimensions. The overwhelming contemporary classic is *Bicycle Thieves*, followed at some distance by *Brief Encounter*, which has its greatest following in France. Early sound films that seem to have made a particularly lasting impression are *Le Million* (for its use of sound?) and *Dreigroschenoper* (for its settings and camera work?). The pacifism of *La Grande Illusion* in the '30's made the strongest international appeal. Griffith, perhaps unexpectedly, is less remembered or admired than Chaplin, Stroheim and Eisenstein. The favourite Flaherty film is, oddly, *Man of Aran*. Beyond this, analysis breaks down. One can't say that those who voted for Chaplin and Stroheim didn't vote for Eisenstein, or that those who voted for *Man of Aran* didn't vote for *Hallelujah!*, or that Pabst fans are not Clair fans. Every rule of this nature is quickly negated by several exceptions. The most unexpected directors come together on the most unexpected films, like de Sica and Reed on *La Kermesse Heroique*, Bunuel and Lean on *White Shadows*, Bresson and Dreyer on *Brief Encounter*, Noel Coward and Michael Powell on *Ninotchka*, Orson Welles and Visconti on *Stagecoach*.

There is reason to ponder, too, why the following films received either no more than one single vote each, or none at all: *The Childhood of Maxim Gorki* (none), *Zéro de Conduite* (Wright), *Earth* (Wright), *Arsenal* (none), *The Road to Life* (none), *October* (none), *Young Mr. Lincoln* (none), *They Were Expendable* (none), *Sciuscia* (Welles), *Fires Were Started* (none), *Louisiana Story* (Bresson), *La Regle du Jeu* (Hamer), and *Le Jour se Lève* (Lean).

And the last word must be left to Cocteau: "*Il faudrait bavarder ensemble et dresser la liste sur un coin de table. . .*"

GAVIN LAMBERT.

#### Vittorio de Sica

1. *Man of Aran*
2. *The Kid*
3. *La Chienne* (Renoir)
4. *Le Million*
5. *l'Atalante*
6. *Kameradschaft* (Pabst)
7. *Storm Over Asia* (Pudovkin)
8. *Potemkin*
9. *Hallelujah!*
10. *La Kermesse Heroique* (Feyder)

#### Robert Hamer

1. *l'Age d'Or*
2. *La Regle du Jeu* (Renoir)
3. *Duck Soup* (Marx Bros.)
4. *Crime Without Passion* (Hecht-MacArthur)
5. *Little Foxes*
7. *Kameradschaft*
6. *War is Hell* (Trivas)
9. *On the Town* (Kelly-Donen)
8. *Open City*

#### Elia Kazan

1. *Potemkin*
2. *Aerograd* (Dovzhenko)
3. *Gold Rush*
4. *Flesh and the Devil* (Clarence)
5. *Open City*
6. *Bicycle Thieves* (Brown)
7. *Shoulder Arms* (Chaplin)
8. *Target for To-night* (Watt)
9. *Femme du Boulanger* (Pagnol)
10. *Marius, Fanny, César* (Pagnol)

#### David Lean

1. *Intolerance* (Griffith)
2. *Variety* (Dupont)
3. *The Crowd*
4. *City Lights*
5. *White Shadows*
6. *A Nous la Liberté!* (Clair)
7. *La Grande Illusion*
8. *Les Enfants du paradis* (Carné)
9. *Le Jour se Lève* (Carné)
10. *Citizen Kane* (Welles)

#### Carol Reed

1. *City Lights*
2. *Ninotchka* (Lubitsch)
3. *Les Enfants du Paradis*
4. *Gone With the Wind* (Fleming)
5. *La Ronde* (Ophuls)
6. *All Quiet on the Western Front*
7. *La Kermesse Heroique*
8. *Variety*
9. *La Femme du Boulanger*
10. *Pygmalion* (Asquith)

#### King Vidor

1. *Intolerance*
2. *Sunrise*
3. *Der Letzte Mann*
4. *Big Parade* (Vidor)
5. *Brief Encounter*
6. *Red Shoes* (Powell-Pressburger)
7. *Open City*
8. *City Lights*
9. *Citizen Kane*
10. *Best Years of our Lives*

#### Luchino Visconti

1. *La Grande Illusion*
2. *Greed*
3. *Potemkin*
4. *Que Viva Mexico!* (Eisenstein)
5. *Hallelujah!* (Vidor)
6. *Stagecoach* (Ford)
7. *Monsieur Verdoux* (Chaplin)
8. *Tabu* (Murnau)
9. *Lost Week-end* (Wilder)
10. *Les Enfants du Paradis*

#### Orson Welles

1. *City Lights*
2. *Greed*
3. *Intolerance*
4. *Nanook* (Flaherty)
5. *Sciuscia* (de Sica)
6. *Potemkin*
7. *La Femme du Boulanger*
8. *La Grande Illusion*
9. *Stagecoach* (Ford)
10. *Our Daily Bread* (Vidor)

#### Billy Wilder

1. *Potemkin*
2. *Greed*
3. *Variety*
4. *Gold Rush*
5. *The Crowd*
6. *La Grande Illusion*
7. *The Informer* (Ford)
8. *Ninotchka*
9. *Best Years of our Lives*
10. *Bicycle Thieves*

#### Basil Wright

1. *Potemkin*
2. *Earth* (Dovzhenko)
3. *Greed*
4. *Nanook*
5. *Zéro de Conduite* (Vigo)
6. *Grapes of Wrath* (Ford)
7. *La Grande Illusion*
8. *Monsieur Verdoux*
9. *Femme du Boulanger*
10. *Student of Prague* (Galeen)





Shooting on "Death of a Salesman": the flashback technique to show action of the past and present occurring simultaneously. In foreground, Mildred Dunnock as Loman's wife: in background, Fredric March (Loman) and his one-time mistress (Claire Carlton). The director, Laslo Benedek, stands just in front of the camera.

THE film producer, customary ogre and bogey-man of satirists and cartoonists, has appeared recently in a new and considerably more attractive light. The studio by tradition most lavishly opulent, for instance, appointed as head of production a man who owed his reputation to a series of lively, intelligent low budget pictures. But the case of Dore Schary and M.G.M. is perhaps less significant than the record of Stanley Kramer. Kramer was lucky in his moment: at a time when the need for economy had become sadly apparent to Hollywood, when companies were trying to recapture the lost audience with slogans and war-cries carrying undertones of real alarm, Kramer achieved the triple victory of low costs, high profits and critical respect. The admiring imitation that followed was, in itself, a sign of the times.

Stanley Kramer, after experience as editor, screen writer and wartime maker of military training films, moved into production at that time, a few years ago, when several notable writers and directors were setting themselves free from the big, institutional concerns and splintering off into short-lived independent companies. Kramer's first film, *So This is New York* (1948) was made for one of these, Enterprise Pictures, which also produced *Body and Soul* and *Force of Evil*. Based on Ring Lardner's *The Big Town* and developed with his characteristic mixture of sophisticated, ironical comment and naively farcical incident, *So This is New York* perhaps seemed too lacking in stars and too distinctively American in flavour for this country, and never achieved a wide showing here. The 'twenties story of a small town family's adventures in New York—the hotel always overflowing with outlandish conventions, the improbable happenings at a racetrack, the city slicker who picks the wrong sister—introduced an engaging, deadpan radio comedian, Henry Morgan, and was

## KRAMER AND COMPANY

Penelope Houston



Stanley Roberts (left) scriptwriter of "Death of a Salesman," with Stanley Kramer.

written and directed (Carl Foreman and Richard Fleischer) with pace, invention and a pleasantly dry humour.

Kramer's second film, the first of five to be released through United Artists, marked the emergence of a new company named Screen Plays Corporation. Though the source was again a Ring Lardner short story, *Champion* disappointingly mishandled it. The story turned the familiar boxing picture situation upside down: the fighter, more corrupt, more brutal than the hangers-on of the ring, reached the top by exploiting and double-crossing his wife, friends and manager. Ring Lardner left him there with a journalist's final comment: "The people don't want to see him knocked. He's champion". The film compromised, diluting and weakening the central situation by providing Midge Kelly with a full set of extenuating circumstances; his viciousness resulted from poverty; he loved his old mother; he expiated his career by dying after the big fight.

Although direction and script (Mark Robson and Carl Foreman) had undeniable slickness and vigour, *Champion* was a sprawling, pretentious film which had the particular misfortune to be shown in this country just after another boxing picture, *The Set Up*, with all the force and concentration of viewpoint it lacked. But *Champion* has its importance. It made a star out of a neglected actor, Kirk Douglas, and, shot in about 20 days at a cost of half-a-million dollars, it made more than four times that amount in the American market alone.

Kramer followed this box-office coup with another Robson-Foreman combination, *Home of the Brave*. This, the first of the cycle of Negro problem pictures, showed the strains and tensions to which a Negro soldier was subjected, culminating in a post-battle breakdown. The psychoanalyst, the con-



temporary *deus ex machina*, brought about a characteristically simple cure. That the hero of Arthur Laurents' original play had been a Jew, and that the transition from Jew to Negro could be so easily effected, perhaps suggests the somewhat journalistic level on which both works were conceived. The film presented a familiar appearance: emotional, rather artificial, plot development, a spuriously comforting solution, an air of solidity and seriousness which did not stand up to close inspection, and an energetic and plausible treatment. James Edwards, the Negro actor, gave an impressive performance. Like *Champion*, the film was shot in three weeks and proved extremely profitable.

By the time these films had appeared—that is, by the end of 1949—Kramer's policy and methods had attracted considerable attention. He has not deviated from these methods since, and this seems a suitable point at which to consider them. In an article in *Films in Review* early last year, Kramer stated some of the problems of the independent producer. His choice of material is governed by two considerations: he cannot afford a single financial setback, since the margin on which he operates is small, and backers must be satisfied; at the same time, he will achieve nothing by trying to play safe and to beat the major studios on their own ground. In other words, his most fitting territory is that range of material sufficiently unusual to attract public notice, without being so daring or so novel as to frighten it away.

The real innovation, however, was the employment of a system of production which, though it struck Hollywood as a revolutionary break with tradition, seems to the critic more like applied common sense. To cut expensive shooting time to the minimum, without losing quality, Kramer laid down that as long as a year would be spent in preparation for each picture, culminating in several weeks intensive rehearsal with both players and technicians. "Every nickel must show on the screen". That the tautness, smoothness and technical finish of his films owes a great deal to this system—since copied by other studios—there can be little doubt. The actual shooting time on his pictures varies between about three and six weeks, with *Champion*, *Home of the Brave*, *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *The Four Poster* near the lower figure and *The Happy Time*, *High Noon* and *My Six Convicts* near the higher. Although one must bear in mind that Hollywood studios do not work a five-day week, this compares with about ten to twelve weeks shooting on a British picture of similar calibre.

Kramer had already built up a production team which, except for one very significant change, remains unaltered. Its members were the associate producer and publicist George Glass, script writer Carl Foreman, cameraman Franz Planer (on *Champion*, *Cyrano*, *Death of a Salesman*), editorial supervisor Harry Gerstad, production designer Rudolph Sternad and composer Dimitri Tiomkin. With the exception of Foreman, a former radio writer who had scripted a few "B" pictures, these were all highly experienced technicians, and it appears likely that with Kramer the individual director counts for less than the trained, practised team. One might wish, however, that he had chosen a different musical director: Tiomkin's music, intrusive and exasperating as the hum of a determined mosquito, has come to be accepted as a sort of unavoidable handicap to a Kramer production.

Three Kramer productions. Top, "So this is New York," his first, from a Ring Lardner comedy, with Henry Morgan, Hugh Herbert, Virginia Grey, Dona Drake. Centre, Gilbert Roland and Millard Mitchell in "My Six Convicts." Kurt Kasznar, Bobby Driscoll, Marcel Dalio, Louis Jourdan, members of the French-Canadian family in "The Happy Time."



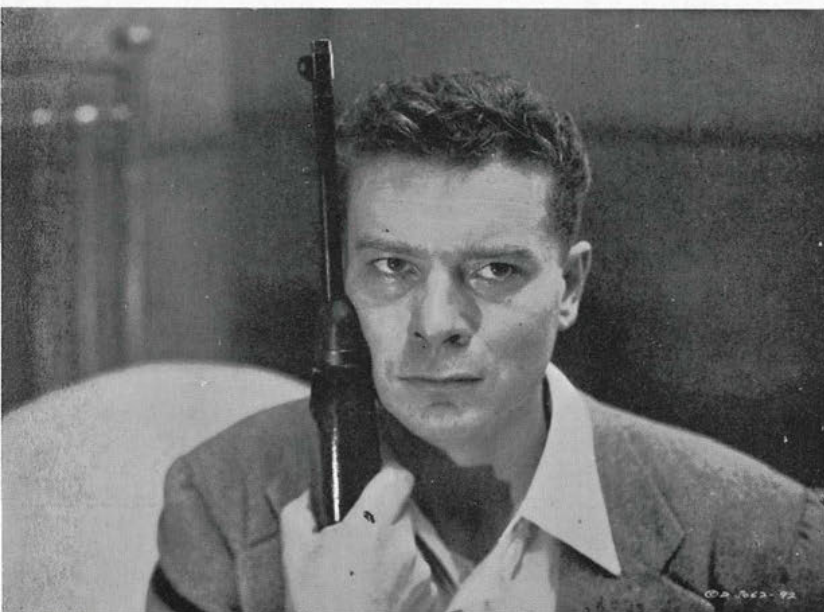




Kramer was the first to give these actors an important screen part. Top, Kirk Douglas (with Ruth Roman) in "Champion." Centre, Marlon Brando in "The Men." Left, Arthur Franz in "The Sniper."

The next film, *The Men*, made in the autumn of 1949, was a remarkable and not altogether expected achievement. Kramer's first two big pictures had indicated the arrival of a producer with a keen eye to what would please the public, a slick, well-timed approach to the "significant" subject and considerable ingenuity in method. *The Men*, with a new backer and a new director, Fred Zinnemann (Robson had moved over to Goldwyn) marked a qualitative change. This story of paralysed ex-servicemen, of the efforts of the irreconcilable patient (played with great force and perception by Marlon Brando, in his first screen part) to adjust himself again to the world, had some of the faults inherent in the convention of the problem picture. But the courage, resolution and compassion of the approach were never in question. Zinnemann's handling of the professional and non-professional players, the balance maintained between the central story and the hospital background, the grasp of the human implications of the material and the vitality of Carl Foreman's script, made this a film of unusual honesty.

There followed the curious *Cyrano de Bergerac*. That a company which had achieved some reputation for realistic treatment of the contemporary scene should trot out this old theatrical warhorse was in itself surprising, though Jose Ferrer's success in the part in Broadway and on radio must have made the venture something of a calculated risk. Ferrer (another actor new to the screen) gave a performance which, though it strikingly lacked pathos and substituted a brief show of fireworks in the early scenes for the authentic *panache*,



had style and intelligence. This apart, the film offered very little: a Roxane and Christian so overshadowed as to be very nearly invisible, and a supporting cast who seemed to find both their costumes and their dialogue a distinct strain.

Michael Gordon's direction lacked flair, and the film suggested some possible shortcomings in Kramer's previously successful production methods. One might have expected *Cyrano* to attract largely through grace and elegance of setting; the drab, unimaginative sets and rather sombre photography indicated that what may, perhaps, be called repertory technicians share some of the limitations of repertory actors.

In the meantime, Kramer had reinforced his financial position. In the autumn of 1950 Sam Katz, a veteran showman and founder of the Balaban and Katz theatre chain, joined the company, bringing in two million dollars. Kramer announced that he meant to work up towards as many as twenty films a year; he was not troubled by problems of distribution: "If I can create the climate whereby creative people come into my organisation, I can get distribution and an outlet anywhere". Early in 1951 came the remarkable



agreement with Columbia; Kramer contracted to make thirty films over a five year period for release through Columbia, his company moving to the Columbia lot but retaining complete self-operation. That Kramer had something to sell had received the most significant form of recognition.

During last April, two Stanley Kramer pictures reached London in consecutive weeks: the last from United Artists, *High Noon*, and the first from Columbia, *Death of a Salesman*. Unfamiliar names appear on the credits of *Death of a Salesman*—an editor and art director working with Gerstad and Sternad and a new composer, Alex North. On the larger scale of operations, the small team can be only a nucleus. More significant, for the first time Carl Foreman's name was missing. Last autumn, called before the Congressional Committee investigating Un-American Activities, he refused to answer questions on the grounds that he might incriminate himself. Kramer expressed displeasure; in October, he bought out Foreman's interest in the company. It is not an attractive episode. Kramer has said in the past that he worked closely with Foreman on policy and choice of story; the full extent of Foreman's influence remains to be seen.



The less considerable of the new films, *High Noon*, brought back Fred Zinnemann (who had meanwhile made *Teresa* for M.G.M.) on the rather surprising territory of a western. If he was not, perhaps, completely engaged by the subject, he handled it with enjoyable skill and assurance. The story of the retiring town marshal (Gary Cooper), on his wedding day, compelled by conscience into a single-handed stand against four outlaws, culminated in a gunfight too conventionally plotted to sustain excitement. But the building up of tension, the marshal's efforts to win support, the atmosphere of the hot, quiet, empty little town with the gunmen waiting by the railway line, were expertly managed. Characteristic of both Zinnemann and Foreman is the sense of moral and social pressures beneath the surface of the action; the last scene, when the fight has ended, the townspeople emerge from their homes and the marshal, in silence, takes off his badge and drives away with his bride, has a force as a moral judgment unusual in the simple action picture.

Like *The Men*, *Death of a Salesman* indicated a boldness and originality in Kramer's policy which his other films do not altogether convey. To bring to the immense cinema audience



Broadway successes filmed by Kramer. Top, Fredric March and Kevin McCarthy in "Death of a Salesman." Centre, Lilli Palmer and Rex Harrison in "The Fourposter." Right, Jose Ferrer in "Cyrano de Bergerac."

stage, appeared as a relief from an intolerable nervous exhaustion. *Death of a Salesman*, with *The Men*, ranks among the best American films produced since the war.

*My Six Convicts* had, at least, a highly original subject: the experiences of a prison psychologist with his self-appointed staff—a gangster (well played by Gilbert Roland), a psychopathic killer, a safebreaker (Millard Mitchell), an embezzler, an alcoholic and a thief. There was material here for a fascinating serious study of the criminal mentality; there was also every chance for a sort of look around behind the bars, prodding the more dangerous animals and stroking the tamer ones. The film, ingeniously scripted by Michael Blankfort, from Donald Powell Wilson's book, and directed by Hugo Fregonese with a certain slickness, played for easy effects; the convicts appeared, on the whole, as quaint, likeable characters, positively eager to take on the credulous psychologist's work and to keep him out of trouble; incidents were highly coloured; the whole atmosphere oddly resembled that of a school story. One does not often complain these days that a film of this sort gives too little documentary information, but *My Six Convicts* provided no indication of the doctor's exact work (Wilson, in fact, conducted an investigation into the connection between drug addiction and crime) and very little of the background which might have made its less likely happenings seem plausible. The rather cheaply written book may be in part responsible, but the film serves as another example of the endless, unsatisfactory attempt to have it both

(Continued on page 48)



a play which uncompromisingly pulls down that facade of illusions and slogans on which the go-getting American bases much of his *credo*, to suggest that the dream of being "well liked", a "big man" provides a poor substitute for intelligence and creative ability, was an act not without courage. Arthur Miller's play has its imaginative limitations, certainly, but one was struck again by what an honest, intelligent and compassionate piece of work it is. The film, both in Stanley Roberts' script and in Laslo Benedek's direction, treated it with a respect and conviction which it undoubtedly repays. What was lost in the unity and compression of the single stage set was compensated for by the quality of performance (the powerful, sympathetic playing of Fredric March, Mildred Dunnock's strained tenderness, Kevin McCarthy's uneasy, shiftless charm) and by the added force which a clever use of settings gave to some of the reminiscences, notably the scene in the subway and the transition from the family breakfast table to the shoddy hotel room. The film developed an almost claustrophobic sense of pressure and strain, so that the salesman's suicide, to an extent even greater than on the







"The Quiet Man." John Wayne. Maureen O'Hara.

## The Current Cinema

THE QUIET MAN Reviewed by Lindsay Anderson

John Ford spent the early part of last summer in Ireland, making his 107th film, or his 108th, if you count the documentary he had just finished on the American Navy's part in the Korean war. *This is Korea* has not been seen in Britain, but we can safely assume that the film which followed offers the greatest possible contrast. Not only is *The Quiet Man* profoundly a film of peace, but in no sense is it impromptu or occasional. Ford had planned for many years to film this story (adapted by Frank Nugent from the novel by Maurice Walsh); its making was a labour of love, and it is not difficult to see why. Sean Thornton, its hero, is also an Irish-American who has never lost his nostalgia for the green countryside of Galway, the countryside of his birth. (Ford's baptismal name is Sean; and it was from Galway that his father emigrated to America). Also like Ford, Sean has been a fighter, though in his case the fights have been literal. His ferocity in the ring has brought about the death of one of his opponents; he has abandoned the profession and put fighting behind him for ever. Returning to his native Innisfree, he buys back the cottage in which he was born, intending to live peacefully there for the rest of his life.

*The Quiet Man* is a contemporary story, but like most of Ford's best work it has no immediate concern with contemporary industrialised society. Its Innisfree is as far removed from television sets and atom bombs as Lincoln's Springfield or Wyatt Earp's Tombstone; it comes with something of a jolt when its heroine, who has just emerged, shawled, from service at the village church, rides away down the road on a shiny modern bicycle. Here society is still an ordered structure; its traditional relationships, the traditional way of living and feelings, are still intact and binding. It is one of these deep-rooted instincts, in fact, which motivates the story; for when Sean Thornton falls immediately in love with Mary Kate Danaher, the beautiful sister of "Squire" Danaher, he finds that for all her red hair and independence of spirit she will not marry without the consent of her huge, pugnacious numbskull of a brother. And when Danaher's consent has been tricked from him and the marriage has taken place, Mary Kate still refuses to consummate it until Sean forces her brother to hand over her full dowry—cash as well as furniture. There is only one way to do this, which Sean, haunted by the memory of his last fight in the ring, is reluctant to try; but when it becomes clear that if he does not fight for Mary Kate he will lose her, he gives in, and in an epic battle trounces Danaher round the village. The result is catharsis: domestic harmony between the Thorntons, and friendliness all round.

"It's the first love story I've ever tried", said Ford, when still in the middle of shooting the film, "a mature love story". And though every foot of *The Quiet Man* shows the unmistakable perspective of his vision, it is distinguished in this respect from anything he has made before. In general, Ford's stories have been concerned with the world of men, the world of action. Love has been a subordinate affair, however charmingly presented. Interestingly enough, as if he has felt the need to creep with some wariness up to this ticklish subject, it is in Ford's last story film before this, *Rio Grande*, that a sexual relationship comes nearest to providing the spring of action, where the need for each other of the Northern Cavalry officer and his resentful Southern wife, their clashes of temperament and loyalties, and their eventual reconciliation, is as near to the heart of the film as the hard riding and fighting.

Here again it is John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara who incarnate hero and heroine—two similarly spirited, thoroughbred human beings who have to learn to live together in spite of the difference in their ideas and attitudes. Though Sean and Mary Kate fall in love at first sight, and though the film ends with the promise of "happy ever after", there is no attempt to minimise the difficulties which are likely to confront people even truly sympathetic when they set up house together. Love is a magical and romantic thing; but marriage is a bargain, to be settled by negotiation and mutual agreement between the two parties. As a study of one such negotiation, how much more civilised is *The Quiet Man* than, for instance, *The Taming of the Shrew* (which in some respects it may be said to resemble); feminists who resent the cave-man fashion in which Mary Kate is dragged five miles across country by her furious husband, at last goaded into pugnacity, should note that at the cost of this simple indignity, she gains her point. One of the most significant morals of the story is indeed contained in the completeness of the female triumph, once granted that her dominion is domestic. By wily exercise of the woman's traditional weapon, Mary Kate wins her dowry, and the pleasure of having her husband fight for her—a fight which, once assured of its inevitability, she does not even wait to see. "I'll be going on home now," she remarks, with a casualness which does not disguise the glint of victory in her eye, "I'll have the supper ready for you". And she steps off jauntily down the hill, leaving the males (poor fools) to do battle behind her. She will make a fine wife, we reflect as we watch her go (in one of those characteristic, long-held shots with which Ford delights to summarise an episode), and be a good mother to his children.



*The Quiet Man* is not a tract, but a story. Comfortable in his conception of this central relationship, Ford has spread himself in a leisurely poetic film, a yarn that never hurries towards its conclusion, always ready to turn aside for a song, a humorous parenthesis or a look at the view. Even its weaknesses are personal. Its director's fondness for the family party, for instance, has made him tolerant of some rather uneasy performances, and one or two of scarcely professional standard: Maureen O'Hara's brothers seem nice chaps, but their acting leaves much to be desired. Some scenes (particularly towards the beginning of the picture) have a distinctly rough-and-ready, first-take air about them. And production difficulties—largely, one imagines, occasioned by bad weather on location—have necessitated a number of studio inserts in exterior sequences which are particularly regrettable in a film which elsewhere gains so immensely from the freshness and vividness of its sense of locality.

But these are faults of virtues, and of virtues rare enough to justify blemishes ten times as obtrusive. One is reminded in this of another fine recent film, *The River*, in which inequalities of acting and dramatic presentation prove unimportant—indeed irrelevant—to the essential poetic quality of the whole. It is a strange affinity: one would not immediately couple the names of Renoir and Ford, though the best work of each has been humane in its inspiration. It is significant that they are contemporaries (Renoir, born in 1894, is in fact Ford's senior by a year), and both veterans of the cinema. Perhaps what we are seeing in these films is a sort of ripeness unfamiliar in this youthful medium—the ripeness of artists who have reached maturity with their *metier*, have learned all the technical lessons they need, and can now afford to break the conventional rules when they light on a subject through which they can express some of the things that experience has taught them. It is a perilous journey, which not many in the history of the cinema have made with success: more commonly cineastes succumb to the pressure of commercialism, either ceasing to make films altogether, or surviving on technique alone, their glibness increasing as their personalities wither away. What we get in these two films, on the other hand, is a stronger-than-ever sense of personal communication, and, instead of glibness, a magnificent relaxation, a mellow confidence that unevenness of surface is unimportant, so long as the core is sound. Although tightness of form is not now what interests Ford (as it was in the days of *The Informer*), his style remains marvellously lucid, its sense of pace and proximity impeccable. He believes in keeping a proper distance from his characters, and resolutely refuses to cut for 'effect': his close-ups and changes of position thus retain a significance which is denied to the work of directors whose movement is dictated by text-book application of film syntax. Ford has never been much of an enthusiast for the montage principle; the flow of his film depends less on the cumulation or juxtaposition of its images, than on the

emotional and dramatic validity of each one of them. This does not imply any lack of care in their selection or weakness of composition—there are close-ups in *The Quiet Man* whose intense communication of mood take the breath away (most memorably the first of Mary Kate, backward glancing at Sean, as she moves slowly down out of frame)—but gives to the film's language the sustained dignity of direct statement.

"Look around you", these directors are saying, "and make the most of your world". Like *The River*, *The Quiet Man* is photographed in Technicolor, largely out of doors, in settings of the greatest natural beauty. With the aid of some remarkable cinematography by Winton Hoch (who also shot *Three Godfathers* and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*) Ford uses colour with adventurous excitement as well as poetic imagination. To include a glimpse of a handsome stained glass window which has taken his fancy, he films a sequence inside a parish church, slows down the camera to obtain an adequate exposure, and damns the consequence to John Wayne's gait. Sean's first glimpse of Mary Kate is presented with a pre-Raphaelite relish for sharp and varied colouring, as well as a kindred romanticism of view: a fairy-tale shepherd girl, auburn haired, scarlet skirted, dressed in two shades of blue, driving her sheep down the rocky dell, yellow gorse in the foreground, the countryside opening out greener in the distance. When Sean comes to his cottage for the first time, it is a squally summer evening, the light from the sky a steely blue, the beck running coldly in foreground as the figures approach over the skyline. The whole story passes in a verdant, fertile world, of green hills, rivers and flower-strewn meadows, a landscape in which soft and rugged cordially combine, as they do in the whole personality of the picture.

In one important respect *The Quiet Man* differs considerably from *The River*. Its vigour unmingled with fatalism, it gives the impression of being firstly concerned with its human commitments. There is a genial pleasure about it in individuality and eccentricity that shows itself at many points in the story, from Victor McLaglen's familiar turn as the blustering, simple-minded Danaher, to the anonymous, sharp-tongued dwarf of a serving maid, fiercely brandishing her feather duster, who heralds her entrance to the film, snappishly reminding him to wipe his big feet. There are a number of delightful sketches: Barry Fitzgerald's Michaelen Flynn, the village bookie and marriage broker, an alcoholic leprechaun of a man; Arthur Shields as the kindly Anglican padre, and Eileen Crowe as his pleasantly dizzy wife ("Have you tiddled your last wink, Cyril?"); a slyly comic performance from Jack McGowan as Danaher's pallid toady. And, at the film's centre, Sean and Mary Kate, played by John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara with a spirited humour and a mutual sympathy which gives their scenes together not merely an intimate emotional conviction, but also a lively sense of the shifts and discomforts of two proud temperaments, learning with difficulty the grateful lesson of accommodating

"The Quiet Man." "Passion breaks out into the open, as a gale of wind sweeps the cottage. . . ." John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara.







"Carrie." Laurence Olivier (Hurstwood) and Jennifer Jones (Carrie) in the last scene.

themselves to each other. It is difficult to know which to admire most: their quiet passages of companionship, in which the current of feeling runs deep under a placid surface, or those two astonishing love scenes where passion breaks into the open, first as a gale of wind sweeps into the cottage, and later as lightning flashes out and rain floods down into the churchyard into which the lovers have wandered—standing together, they embrace silently in the storm, he tenderly protective, she alternately fearful and exhilarated, the water drenching his shirt to transparency and revealing the flesh beneath. This last scene in particular is a poetic invention of wonderful originality and excitement.

The last half of *The Quiet Man* is concerned almost exclusively with the refusal of a wife to sleep with her husband, and its action climaxes in a long slogging match between two Herculean fighters. Yet the censor has awarded it a "U" certificate; nor, till one sits back to analyse the story, does his judgment seem in the least surprising. It is not that the film cheats or evades: it is rather a tribute to the unalloyed purity of the comedy, its absolute freedom from salacity or sensationalism. The battle between Sean and Danaher is an affair of gusty enjoyment, its course pursued by a cheerful, enthusiastic crowd: the great fists lam out, the huge bodies thud in turns to the ground, into streams, haystacks, through bar-room doors. Nothing, we know, can really hurt these titans. All this is very far from the current habit with violence, with hand-held cameras poking in to catch the very smell of the blood. It is the same with the humour of the unconsummated marriage: the balance between tenderness and laughter is preserved without a falter. The result is a successful amalgam of subtlety and knock-about, popular entertainment and poetry extraordinary in an age as culturally corrupt and divided as our own. One wonders whether the film will be appreciated for this by the people who are perpetually (and largely unreasonably) censuring contemporary artists for their lack of the common touch. "Impetuous!" breathes Michaelleen Flynn, regarding with awe the wreck of the bed in which he imagines Sean and Mary Kate to have passed their wedding night, "Impetuous! Homeric!" Shakespearean is a word for *The Quiet Man*.

## CARRIE

Reviewed by Gavin Lambert

"'Love' or 'lust' (and the one is but an intellectual sublimation of the other) moves the seeker in every field of effort. It is the desire to enthrone and enhance, by every possible detail of ornamentation, comfort and colour—love, sensual gratification—that man in the main moves, and by that alone. Protean as this impulse may be, and it takes many forms, it stands revealed as the underlying reality of a thousand astounding impulses or disguises—pathetic, lying, simulating, denying, but the same old impulse everywhere and under all circumstances . . . Hold fast, trace it back, and there, at bottom, sex appears, a craving for love, and its accompanying sensual gratification, and there is no other."

That is Theodore Dreiser on *Neurotic America and the Sex Impulse*; the application of his typically bombastic pronouncement to his two most famous novels, *Sister Carrie* (1905) and *An American Tragedy* (1925) can easily be traced. What is interesting is that the two Dreiser films, *A Place in the Sun* and *Carrie* (made by Wyler before *Detective Story*), produced almost simultaneously at the same studio, unite in sublimating—by no means intellectually—their author's rumbling and fatal lusts into love; both films are conceived as, firstly, Great Love Stories. In *A Place in the Sun*, Eastman's greedy infatuation with the rich society girl, which causes his downfall, becomes The Real Thing; and in William Wyler's film the blind middle-aged passion of George Hurstwood for pretty little Carrie Meeber is made more or less conventionally romantic. Dreiser's "wild fires" are not permitted nakedly to blaze.

In both cases, writers and directors were right to try and start again from the material offered by Dreiser; strong and original as his situations are, he crushed the life out of them with irrelevant detail and half-baked moralising. Whether a romanticised version of Dreiser's "chemical" relationships can successfully be achieved, neither film (though *A Place in the Sun* was more persuasive) has proved.

Like Eastman, Carrie Meeber is conceived as such a passive, ambiguous creature that neither in the novel nor the film (in spite of Jennifer Jones' very sensitive, appealing performance) does she come completely to life. At the turn of the century she leaves her small-town family to find romance and fortune in Chicago; her dream is very much Eastman's dream—the American dream. She is quickly disillusioned by becoming the mistress of Charlie Drouet, a lustful and vulgar commercial traveller; then she attracts the attention of a handsome, lonely, repressed manager of a fashionable restaurant. Hurstwood has social position, money (all tied up, unfortunately, in the name of his ambitious, unloving wife), a son and a daughter. He abandons everything to his passion for Carrie. He persuades her to elope with him, stealing money to do so, and bigamously marries her. Recovery from this series of social outrages proves impossible; Hurstwood cannot find work, they sink lower and lower, weighed down by poverty. Carrie leaves him to go on the stage and Hurstwood, irrevocably outcast, is broken. He takes to beggary and the flop-house. One evening Carrie finds her former lover outside the theatre at which she is playing, is overcome with guilt at the sight—"I ruined him!"—and wants to take him back. But it is too late; Hurstwood would not accept the humiliation, and, besides, he is dying.

The irony of the situation—which, presumably, caused the novel to be banned when it first appeared—is that Hurstwood, a successful American citizen, is ruined by the consequences of an over-riding passion (described in great detail), not for an adventuress but for an ordinary American girl with an ordinary American dream. Carrie craves luxury and excitement, but she is not capable, unlike Eastman, of calculating for it; she is not faced with a crucial



dilemma; she leaves Drouet and goes off with Hurstwood quite unaware that disaster is bound to overtake them. The novel's impressive feature is Hurstwood—a figure conceived on a large scale, racked with sudden desire and the prospect of release from a loveless marriage, obsessed with Carrie, refusing at first to face the social pressures that will surely drag him down, then horribly degraded and broken. This character remains the best feature of the film, played with a fine suppressed force and feeling by Laurence Olivier, achieving a pathetic and hopeless dignity in the final scene.

If the film as a whole had been on this level, it would have been extremely impressive; but it emerges as half a plushy period romance and half a serious document about human beings. Wyler's handling, though less brilliant and inventive than Stevens' in *A Place in the Sun*, has a polish, compactness, rich surface and confident drive that are always admirable, but it has also a commonplace element which reduces the bitterness of the central episodes between Hurstwood and Carrie to the familiar outlines of love (the style is too imperturbable for lust) trying to find a way through hard luck and poverty. Only at moments—as in the effective scene of Mrs. Hurstwood's (a ferocious Miriam Hopkins) descent on the lovers in their lodgings—is the real predicament of the situation revived. This conventional streak begins, of course, in the competently fashioned but unoriginal script by Ruth and Augustus Goetz (who turned *Washington Square* into *The Heiress*). By concentrating too closely on the two triangle dramas—Carrie-Hurstwood-Drouet, and Carrie-Hurstwood-Mrs. Hurstwood—they leave too little time for the ugly and revealing backgrounds which Dreiser so fully described: the empty materialism of the Hurstwood home, the squalor of Chicago, the factory in which Carrie at first worked, the slums to which she and Hurstwood are driven. The first forty minutes, Carrie's arrival in Chicago, her affair with Drouet, the entrance of Hurstwood, are excellently done; then the whole middle sags, conventional and with situations rather dully contrived; it is not until Hurstwood's degradation—beginning with the brilliant scene in which he returns to the lodging-house and finds Carrie has gone, following him to the employment exchange and the flop-house, finally to the impressive last sequence at the theatre—that it comes properly to life again.

The commonplaceness is, one feels, an essential part of Wyler's equipment as a director; as a gifted and accomplished craftsman he has few rivals, but as an observer of life below the surface he is uninteresting. In *Carrie* he has chosen material with more possibilities than any of his films since *The Little Foxes*; uneven as it is, it appears to be his most interesting film since that one; and, though the commonplace has become increasingly ingrained, its best sequences rank with his best work.

## THE FALL OF BERLIN

Reviewed by H. R. Trevor-Roper

Anyone who enjoys battle scenes—cannonades, bombardments, cities crumbling into rubble, aircraft plunging in flames, the skeletons of tanks protruding from snowbound battlefields, and hand-to-hand warfare for the possession of ruined heights,—and likes all this splendidly executed in colour too, will certainly enjoy the Russian film *The Fall of Berlin*. He will probably also enjoy, rather than be persuaded by, the naive, uncompromising propaganda which of course accompanies and informs this essentially propaganda-film. And he may even enjoy the silly romance, without which a propaganda film might fail to appeal even to the most orthodox communist—the romance of Natasha the school-teacher and Alyosha the stakhanovite worker in an idyllic steel-factory.

Thanks to his record output, Alyosha begins the story already a hero, cosseted and embraced by effusive works-managers who reward him by sending him, modestly protesting, by plane to Moscow. And now, who is this kindly unassuming patriarch who, somewhat inappropriately dressed in a waiter's jacket of spotless white, and peacefully hoeing round the roots of a young fruit-tree in his modest garden, looks up from his labour towards the approaching plane? Who indeed but the father of his country, Comrade Stalin, preparing quietly to greet the worker-hero. Alyosha lunches informally with the Politburo—Kalinin, Stalin, Molotov, Berya—is toasted by them all, instructs them all with a rhapsody on steel output, and is sent back on his way rejoicing; but not before he has mentioned to Comrade Stalin his personal romance and some of its problems. Natasha is rather too fond of poetry—but then, it transpires, so also is Comrade Stalin, that cultivated connoisseur of the arts. In the end Comrade Stalin urges Alyosha to write freely and consult him on any such matters. This picture of Stalin as a Bolshevik Ann Temple, giving postal advice to communist couples on their personal problems, is

engaging: it is also (in view of Stalin's own matrimonial unsuccess) somewhat surprising.

But now suddenly all is changed: suddenly, unprovoked, the invaders have come, spreading cruel destruction; the model school, the model factory, are wrecked; Natasha is carried off to Germany; Alyosha is a soldier; the war is on. We see Stalin's headquarters—a modest hall, plainly panelled and hung with unobtrusive portraits—from which he and his generals quietly plan their resistance and resolutely execute their plans. We see Hitler's headquarters—the vast Chancellery in Berlin, glittering with capitalist-imperialist magnificence, in which the Fuhrer, walking neurotically up and down, does not plan at all but screams and orders and gesticulates while the lackeys of the court, parting this way and that to make way for him wherever he goes, click and salute and utter servile slogans of obedience. And these two opposite courts, of God and Satan, are artistically brought together when the Fuhrer, screaming that the Russians no longer exist, hears suddenly, on the radio, the calm voice of Stalin clearly demonstrating, by his speech at the usual May Day Parade in Moscow, that they do. We also see the Yalta Conference (there is a grotesque caricature of Mr. Churchill) at which the superiority of the Russians over their Allies in power, resolution and honesty is made clear. And then there is the final battle for Berlin—the most spectacular, most impressive part of the whole film—and, complementary to it, the corresponding scenes in Hitler's ever-contracting headquarters, ending with the last grotesque and ghastly gestures of marriage (with a somewhat capitalistically over-chic Eva Braun) and suicide. (Pedantically I note errors in detail here—the method of death, for instance; but the most violent distortion is the scene in which Hitler, hearing that the Russians have penetrated the Berlin Underground, orders—in spite of the anguished protests of his secretary—that the Underground be flooded, so that thousands of Germans sheltering there are hideously drowned. This horrible incident is pure fiction). Finally, after a vivid battle for its ruins, the Red Flag is flown from the summit of the Reichstag, and, to the strains of a glorifying anthem, the *Deus ex Machina*, Comrade Stalin himself, descends from the skies, and, emerging from his plane, pronounces to an enthusiastic but orderly crowd (Comrade Stalin, in this film, never needs a guard) his message of fraternal goodwill and peaceful reconstruction in the world.

Artistically of course this should be the end; but what of the romance? Of course that also must be concluded, and so, though perhaps it is rather an anticlimax, the victorious stakhanovite and the liberated schoolmistress recognise each other in the jubilant crowd, and are recognised also by their benign protector (who has forgotten nothing), Comrade Stalin himself. So the major and the minor plots are again fused together as Stalin embraces the school-

"Mama, whose views on education are remarkably strict, has brought me up to be extremely short-sighted. . . . Do you mind my looking at you through my glasses?" Dorothy Tutin (Cecily) and Joan Greenwood (Gwendolen) in "The Importance of Being Earnest".





mistress, and all (presumably) live happily ever after in the best of possible worlds.

The splendours and absurdities of this film are about equal, but the absurdities preponderate in the first part, the splendours in the second. It is said to be composed—in part—of films actually taken during the fighting, and certainly the battle scenes are sometimes of an incomparable vividness. It is said that parts have been omitted in the version shown in England, and it is likely that some other parts will need to be omitted when the film is shown elsewhere. Much of the film is caricature, and because of this it cannot attain to tragic stature. Black is too black, white too white for humanity, the essential of tragedy, to seem really involved. Historically it is no record—though the mere fact of its exhibition implies at least one very interesting fact: the Russians who—after a statement by Stalin—for long refused to admit Hitler's suicide have now publicly committed themselves to the acceptance of orthodoxy or near-orthodoxy (orthodoxy of course being my doxy) on this point. As propaganda I doubt if it will prove convincing, at least in England, where so much of any audience retains a first hand familiarity with the war and cannot altogether forget certain details of it (such as British participation). But technically it is certainly interesting; it will assuredly delight even those whom it will never persuade.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

Reviewed by Karel Reisz

The opening shots of Anthony Asquith's film of *The Importance of Being Earnest* reveal the interior of a late Victorian theatre, the curtain just about to rise. This, we expect, is going to be one of those unashamed pieces of filmed theatre, justified, we hope, by stylish handling and decoration. The expectations are fully met: the play—a welcome choice, giving the director some infallible dialogue to support—has been translated intact, no attempt being made to interpose anything between the spectator and Oscar Wilde. The hopes are less completely fulfilled, for the decoration is disappointingly sober. One could have done with less cluttered sets, larger and more extravagant hats, an altogether more adventurous use of the period scene.

Under these circumstances, it is really the acting alone that tells and, with two exceptions, it is extremely enjoyable. Michael Redgrave plays rather stiffly and Michael Denison does not really suggest Algy's essential class or charm (one wishes, too, he threw an occasional line away instead of hammering them all home so energetically). Joan Greenwood gives another of her precariously balanced performances, speaking her lines as if she dimly suspected some hidden menace in them which she can't quite identify, and giving them a freakish kind of cabaret humour. But the main honours go, as so often in British films, to the older actors. Miles Malleon's Canon Chasuble is consistently funny and Margaret Rutherford's Prism suitably grotesque. Dame Edith Evans's archetypal dowager booms and bellows with rapacious gusto, suggesting (surely wrongly) that Lady Bracknell's bite is far sharper than her resounding bark. Her last scene with a touchingly subdued Prism is the film's only real, particular triumph. The whole performance, rich though it is in humour, does tend to disturb the film's balance: Dame Edith demonstrates her utter contempt for those who would have their screen acting different from the theatre, and makes the other actors, with their more refined camera techniques, appear a little thin-blooded when they are forced to share the screen with her. The resultant discord may be her fault or theirs (whichever way one cares to look at it); either way, a firmer, more consistent controlling hand should have been applied by the director.

In spite of these reservations, the director's uncompromising respect for a sophisticated, adult entertainment makes the film something of an event in the contemporary British cinema and proves again that this, Oscar Wilde's most rewarding play, remains wonderfully sharp and funny.

## RASHOMON

Reviewed by Simon Harcourt-Smith

*Rashomon*, some may argue, can fairly rest upon the merits we first see in it, upon the pleasure and inspiration it gives to Western audiences. We are, of course, easily led to over-estimate a film where dialogue, setting and attitude are alike exotic. I have seen eminent Italian critics astonished and embarrassed by our admiration of certain Italian films, and at the same time they have perceived in some brightly conventional English picture a significance to us invisible. It is, then, important to be able to set a foreign film in,

so to speak, its national context. With *Rashomon*, moreover, the problem grows infinitely complicated, for it confronts us with a tradition and a point of view perhaps the most remote from our own world. Some seventy years ago the Whistlerian circle rediscovered Japanese art for the West; they admired blindly; the roughest theatrical print, the most repellent view of Fujiyama commanded their ecstasies; it took time and experience before the West could distinguish the attack of mere novelty from the claims of excellence.

In the case of *Rashomon*, an important first consideration is its historical setting. Japan escaped foreign invasion till the summer of 1945; nevertheless, few countries have known more violent vicissitudes of fortune. Periods of enlightened prosperity have continually alternated with others of agonising disorder; time and again the central authority has collapsed into banditry, or into a feudalism scarcely distinguishable from it. As suddenly, order has revived, and a brilliant period of tranquillity has followed.

*Rashomon* is set in a moment of desperate anarchy, in the eighth century, from which Japan seemed doomed never to rise. The first few feet of film masterfully establish the mood of the times. Relentless rain drives a servant, a priest and a woodcutter to shelter under a broken down, once pompous, Kyoto gate; while they wait there, the inner story of *Rashomon* is unfolded in four conflicting versions. Rain and dilapidation frame nine-tenths of the picture. Yet a Japanese audience would remember that upon this apparently hopeless moment will shortly follow one of the most glorious epochs in their history, the almost too exquisite age we slightly know from the *Tale of Genji*. We soon become tolerably certain that dawn must follow the darkness. Sure enough, with the epilogue the downpour ceases, and an abandoned baby is discovered. If the woodcutter, already a father of six, heightens his plight by adopting it, this altruism at least restores the priest's battered belief in humanity. Here the symbolism bears an implicit but obvious reference to Japan's recent chastisement and her present recovery. It is also oddly reminiscent in mood of German silent films from some thirty years ago. They were also made in the aftermath of defeat.

With the central story, on the other hand, the film assumes a different style. This is an episode of violence, of virtue and of feudal honour in danger. In short, when one has stripped it of all modern embellishments, here is an episode in which the Japanese popular-heroic theatre, the "Kabuki", habitually delights. In almost all "Kabuki" stories we find a duel, where the contestants, hissing and agile as cats, leap and spring about each other with an acrobacy that never becomes ridiculous, nor ceases to excite. In *Rashomon* we find just such a duel. And though we see it in two different versions, so admirably photographed and played is it, we are not for a moment fatigued by repetition. Repetition is indeed a salient quality of the "Kabuki" theatre. The pieces generally played are long, gestures are stereotyped, events move round and round to the same point. (Yet to the Western eye, provided one does not see too much of it, the "Kabuki" formula is probably the most satisfactory style for playing melodrama that exists today.)

The suggestion that the director, Akira Kurosawa, has borrowed the traditions of the "Kabuki" theatre for his central narratives, does not at all decry the remarkable performances of his three principal actors—Toshiro Mifune as the bandit, Machiko Kyo as the wife, Masayuki Mori as the nobleman. The story is a basically simple one upon which almost musical variations are worked. A minor aristocrat travelling through a lonely forest with his wife, mounted on their only horse, has the bad luck to attract the interest of a notorious bandit. Through her long travelling-veil the bandit perceives and is inflamed by the wife's beauty. The husband meets his death, the wife is enjoyed by the bandit, the horse is stolen. These are the only certain facts. The crux of the film lies in the conflict between the bandit's confession when arrested, the wife's story, the husband's evidence from the tomb conveyed through a medium, and the final revelation of the woodcutter sheltering under the gate. (The coincidence of his presence as a witness is perhaps the least satisfactory feature of the story). Was the husband killed in a fight that did him credit, did he die accidentally, did he commit suicide, was he despatched like a coward? Was the wife raped, did she submit joyfully to the bandit's lusts, did she incite him to murder her husband? Live bandit and dead husband unite in preserving unimpaired the feudal code of honour, even at the expense of representing the wife as a wanton. But the woodcutter dares to suggest the husband has behaved in a manner which even a modern Japanese nobility could hardly approve. For this reason, I understand, the film has been disliked in its own country.

We find ourselves here in a world where social conventions and psychological reactions are alike alien to us, and at the same time



infinitely absorbing. When we discount the familiar elements of the "Kabuki" theatre, when we admit the occasional slowness of direction, the slightly monotonous quality of the wife's tearful prostrations, we must still concede that here we are in the presence of a genuinely original work of art, one which by its example could enrich the technique of the Western cinema. Kurosawa's extraordinary alternations of long shot and close-up, particularly where we see the wife idly moving her hand in a stream, and the sequence of the woodcutter's journey into the forest, reveal to us how much we have lost through fear of violent camera movement; the police examination of the bandit, staged against a plain white-washed wall, has an unsurpassed simple reality; the invocation of the dead husband, the medium's whirling sleeves, and the final revelation in the tortured face of a soul that has found no peace in death, is a moment of unique poetry.

Even if some recent visitor to Japan, then, were to assure me that the intelligentsia of Tokyo hailed *Madonna of the Seven Moons* as a pattern of advanced film-making, an inspiration to future Japanese films, I should still believe *Rashomon* to be one of the most stimulating and extraordinary pictures made anywhere in the world since the end of the war.

## IN BRIEF

**PAT AND MIKE (M.G.M.).** After fighting inconclusive engagements in the sex war through journalism, science, politics and law, Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn turn, in *Pat and Mike*, to the tougher terrain of professional sport. Hepburn appears as an all-round champion (specialities: golf and tennis), Tracy as a promoter making a valiant effort to go straight, though hampered by a Runyonesque entourage of small-time crooks. There are some very engaging moments; an interview with Tracy's partners; Hepburn trying out a little elegant ju-jitsu; a nightmare tennis match in which the court gets longer, the net higher and her opponent (Gussie Moran) more ominous; the sulks of a neanderthal boxer, amiably played by Aldo Ray. As in *Adam's Rib*, the Garson Kanin-Ruth Gordon script slightly lacks punch, opening up opportunities but failing to clinch them, and George Cukor's direction is no more than workmanlike. But the assurance and finesse of the playing delight. The astringent, nervous, jerky temperament of Hepburn strikes against and complements Tracy's increasingly smooth, relaxed style: the irresistible force confronts the almost immovable object. As such accomplished performers as Rosalind Russell and Myrna Loy seem to become submerged in the farcical free-for-all or family sentimentality of current comedy fashion, one particularly admires the manner with which this pair imperturbably support a more good-humoured, more sophisticated tradition.—*Penelope Houston*.

**SINGIN' IN THE RAIN (M.G.M.).** It was a good idea to use Hollywood in the 'twenties as the background for a musical; the place and the period provide a brilliant surface, sometimes absurd, sometimes nostalgic. As in *On The Town*, Gene Kelly and his co-director, Stanley Donen, have contrived a musical of much gaiety, vigour and invention—but what it lacks, and what *On The Town* had, is unity. Its story, about a ridiculous costume picture, completed just as sound comes in, having to be turned into a musical and the intrigues involved when its vapid blonde star is found to have a hideously nasal voice, is basically simple enough; but in the scripting it has become rather over-plotted, and a tendency to elaboration seems to have infected the film as a whole. The appeal of Kelly's personality, and the appeal of *On The Town*, lies in its naturalness and simplicity—here in his wonderful *Singin' in the Rain* solo, which is as good as anything he has ever done; in his final ballet, though it contains many exciting effects, it is a little swamped by "art." Equally clever, but simpler, is the montage sequence depicting the arrival of sound, culminating in a delicious film studio number exploiting 'twenties fashions; this is the kind of thing at which Kelly and Donen excel. One would be the last to wish them not to experiment—and there are many successful and original things in *Singin' in the Rain* (as well as one disgraceful plagiarism from *The Pirate*)—but one hopes they will, next time, use less apparatus. They don't need it.—*James Morgan*.

**MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA (R.K.O.).** "Mother and Hazel always said you were bad! They were right!" Thus, on the verge of tears, husky Captain Peter Niles (Kirk Douglas) denounces Lavinia-Electra Mannon (Rosalind Russell), and leaves her to the desolate, shuttered family mansion where she will brood alone for life. The cycle of Greek doom, guilt, incest and murder in an unhappy New England household at the end of the Civil War is complete. The bathos is, unfortunately, only too typical of



Castellani's "E' Primavera" stayed (as "Springtime in Italy") too shortly in London; a gay and tender comedy, with a beautiful performance by Elena Varzi (above), one hopes it will soon be revived.

Eugene O'Neill's play, which at other times achieves only bombast; it strives, insistently, for a grandeur that it never attains. In a few more years, one feels, it will seem just as absurd as, and much more pretentious than, Victorian melodrama; one can imagine a malicious—and, presumably, shortened—revival. Dudley Nichols' version, made in 1947, is a respectful, obviously sincere, but uninspired exercise in filmed theatre. It lacks force and concentration, and the acting, apart from Michael Redgrave's Orin-Orestes, is not distinguished. Sets and photography are stylish; the music, curiously, employs a repeated choral rendering of "O Shenandoah."

*James Morgan.*

**MACAO (R.K.O.).** Josef von Sternberg, who hasn't made a feature film since the bizarre *Shanghai Gesture* in 1942, makes a very tentative return. The film is rumoured to have been extensively re-shot by Nicholas Ray; only moments of it, certainly, suggest Sternberg's decorative touch—a dockside chase photographed through glimmering fishing nets, the startled eyes of a black cat suddenly shining from a darkened window at night, the gambling saloon with money being hauled up and down in cages and a female Chinese croupier who utters weird, threatening cries. Macao itself, wickedest city of the mysterious East, is evoked by a number of library exterior shots and settings only at times stylish—there are a few stuffily, tawdrily exotic interiors that remind one of *Morocco*, *Shanghai Gesture* etc. The Robert Mitchum-Jane Russell intrigue is quite routine, only conducted at a slow, rather actionless pace. They play the sullen adventurer ("I was lonely in Times Square on Christmas Eve") and disillusioned adventuress ("I'm so tired of running") who meet and discover the *coup de foudre*; there is an American racketeer and gambling-house owner ("I choked this town with my bare hands till it coughed up") and a detective disguised as a commercial traveller. The trail of violence and double-cross is punctuated by Jane singing "One for my Baby" and "You Kill me".—*Gavin Lambert*.





Centre: the team  
in action  
("Sailor Beware").  
Left and below:  
aspects of Lewis.

Reactions to Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis are curiously violent. Intellectuals do not merely dislike them, they detest them. Critics ignored their films for a long time, then condemned them with virulence: Milton Shulman wrote in the *Evening Standard* that "they represent a deterioration in humorous taste not far removed from what might be expected if the printing press were suddenly abolished or if Attila the Hun reconquered Europe". Of Jerry Lewis' appearance and actions, he added: "in more enlightened times it would be considered impolite, almost indecent, to be amused by such ugliness, lunacy and deformity".

Their fans, however, are legion. Probably no comedy pair has been so popular; in their earliest and best period, Laurel and Hardy did not have the vehicle of the full-length feature film; Olsen and Johnson appeared too infrequently; Abbott and Costello lack sex-appeal; Neagle and Wilding are insufficiently slapstick. In America above all the popularity of Martin and Lewis is fabulous. Last year they replaced Bob Hope as the second leading box-office attraction; they have made the covers of *Life* and *Look*; and there was the famous incident at New York's Paramount Theatre, when they appeared as the stage attraction preceding the movie. So successful was their act that the ecstatic audience refused to leave. Thousands stayed in their seats after the show, while the queues piled up outside. Finally Lewis and Martin bribed them out with the promise of a free show in the street. The fans rushed out, the queues were hustled in. The pair then proceeded with their act from windows and fire escapes, auctioning their clothes, tearing up anything in sight and throwing it to the mob below; then they hurried back to the stage. For the first couple of days they were able to leave the theatre in disguise; then even this became impossible, and they were confined to their dressing-rooms day and night, while visitors arrived behind flying squads. This went on for two weeks. After a further two weeks in Chicago, they had distributed over a million autographed photos and earned more than a quarter of a million dollars. They had become the highest paid act in American show business.

If Martin and Lewis come to the London Palladium, as forecast, we may expect similar manifestations, for their rise in popularity in Britain over the last six months has been remarkable. With young people generally, and the armed forces in particular, they can do no wrong.

What is their appeal? A film distributor's explanation is:



## They Made Me a Myth-2

"Here are two young men, one of whom is a very great comedian, and the other the first straight man in history who is good-looking, a charming singer and a fine comedian." This can be dismissed on the grounds that none of the claims is justified. A "veteran showman" has commented: "The comedy hits everyone, it's not just for the bobby-sox set, or the comic book set, or the smart set. It's for the human set." Well, obviously in England we do not have a "human set", for their appeal could hardly be more localised. Lewis' own explanation is closer to the mark, but still leaves one wondering. "Whenever Dean and I," he said, "are working, we have fun. We enjoy the gags and nonsense just as much as the audience does, and they feel it and react to it."

Mr. Shulman blames the audience: he says their success proves that there is "an awesomely large public for witlessness and crudity practically unparalleled in the history of motion pictures." From this one might imagine that Martin and Lewis provide entertainment on the *Quo Vadis* level, deliberately catering to the lowest instincts of its public. In fact, their films are inoffensive and scrupulously clean. Though Laurel and Hardy recently lamented: "Present day comedians, particularly those in America, gain laughs at the expense of someone else's discomfort. Insult gags are a



crudity we avoid," this elementary form of humour seems equally prevalent in their own films. Furthermore, one laughs more *with* Lewis than *at* him.

In private life, if it can be called that, Lewis is a pleasant, 26-year old American with a crew cut and a real name of Joseph Levitch. He is married to a former crooner, Patti Palmer, and has two sons. Apparently he needs "repeated demonstrations that he is really loved", and for a long time used to sleep with a pistol by his side.

On the screen he claims our immediate sympathy by being the biggest physical and mental failure ever. He can neither sing nor dance, and does so continually. His laugh is hideously metallic; his voice an ear-splitting, one-note whine; his face contorts like wet elastic, his eyes are strangely mobile; and his favourite phrases—"Is this for real?"; "For this we should pay?"; "Give me for instance"—suggest that he has only recently encountered the English language. He is a "mistake", yet he is rather nice. Men can feel superior to him, while furtively sympathising with his petulant, childish defiance of convention. He is unathletic, unsuccessful sexually (the final clinch does not convince) and a catastrophe in the armed forces. He is coy, arch, and often indulges in female impersonation. His naivety disarms; his infantilism suggests the awful child that will never grow up; and he is cuddly, so that women can feed maternal complexes and feel perfectly safe with him.

With Dean Martin they can derive even greater satisfaction by feeling unsafe. His screen characterisation is slick and cocksure, possessing all the unattractiveness of the professional charmer; he sings uninterestingly. He gave a convincing and unpleasant



## Funny Men

# DEAN MARTIN and JERRY LEWIS

portrayal of a drunk in *The Stooge*, but otherwise his acting has been negligible. For a long time I assumed this was really a one-man pair, but I was wrong. Apparently Lewis is not half the comedian without him, and women are attracted by his self-confidence.

Martin's real name is Dino Crocetti, and he was born in 1917. He has been a prizefighter, garage attendant, millhand and gambling house croupier. He has had five children, four by a first marriage. He has never slept with a pistol by his bed. Lewis lost 20 pounds and had a breakdown after their last personal appearance tour, but Martin took it all in his stride. His only complex appears to be shyness in face of the educated.

Though varying stories are told, it seems that they first met in 1942 and got together in 1946 at a nightclub in Atlantic City where Lewis was giving impersonations. He persuaded the management to bring Martin into the act, promising new material; but their efforts to work out a "routine" were unsuccessful, and the combination flopped. Given warning by Mr. Skinny D'Amato, one of the nightclub owners, they ran riot during their next appearance, seizing trays from waiters, ad-libbing wildly, insulting the customers. When Martin sang, Lewis mugged behind his back; they howled

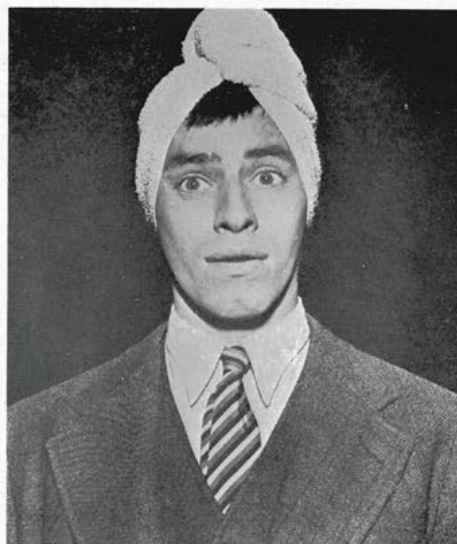


and screamed continuously, and were an enormous success. A season at New York's Copacabana club followed, where they caused further disturbances by taking turns as doormen and hat-checkers. Finally, they were spotted by the producer Hal Wallis, who has had them under contract ever since. None of their films has been exceptionally good, but all have had splendid or remarkable moments.

In *My Friend Irma* Lewis played an orange-squeezer in a café, whose hand is duly splayed like a duck's and to whom the suggestion of a changeover to grapefruit is terrifying. Its success produced a sequel: *My Friend Irma Goes West*. Their first complete "vehicle", *At War with the Army*, was a triumph of energy over shoddy production. Maintaining a deafening and unalterable note, Lewis sang "The Navy gets the gravy but the Army gets the beans", and Martin crooned "Tonda Wonda Hoy".

*That's My Boy* came next, but owing to its delayed release in Britain many critics here mistook it for their latest. British critics noticed a definite improvement over the earlier films (which were, of course, later), but it is a probably a little restrained for their real fans. All the same, the fact that it made even more money in America than *At War with the Army* proved the comedians' rising popularity. It contains the roundest and most serious characterisation Lewis has given, of "Junior" Jackson, the weedy, hypochondriac, unathletic, petulant and almost blind son of "Jarring Jack" Jackson, in his day the university's greatest all-round athlete. "Junior" is sent to the same university, with father firmly indicating the footsteps he should follow. This is an amusing and engaging film; one is only sorry that "Junior" has to be converted to athletics and become a champion, too.

The cult of the moron: three scenes from the life of a popular cretin. Jerry Lewis in "The Stooge" (top and below), "Sailor Beware" (centre).



*The Stooge*, which followed, was especially popular in Britain. Martin played a song and dance man, Lewis his calamitous stooge. Lewis has two nice scenes, one when he goes into a café and asks for "just a glass of hot water", a violent argument ensuing; the other when he revives the Bob Hope gag of examining himself in the mirror. Preening and smiling, he conveys immense satisfaction at seeing himself as an irresistible charmer, with moments of wistful doubt at the image which are most sympathetic.

*Sailor Beware* is again very derivative: Lewis as the hypochondriac recruit (he is even allergic to women, being unable to breathe in their presence), follows in the footsteps of Danny Kaye in *Up in Arms*. A boxing scene, though hilarious, is clearly borrowed from *City Lights*. The dialogue—"Where were you born?"—"In bed"—is elementary, as usual.

Lewis has made a number of "home movies", that peculiarly American form of torture. They are usually parodies: *Watch on the Lime*, *Fairfax Avenue*, *A Streetcar Named Repulsive*. The stars of these are Lewis and his partner, Tony Curtis and his wife Janet Leigh.

Offstage, Lewis and Martin are also merciless funny men. Their behaviour has been described as "loopy charm", but it seems misleading; meeting them, one must be prepared for them to butter one's tie, nail one's shoes to the floor, pour water into one's pockets and salt on one's hair. They lock people in lavatories, strip to their shorts and go to sleep in front of guests, burst into conferences, kiss any passing woman, suddenly remark, "I was walking along counting my nostrils" or "I'm dancing with tears in my eyes because the girl in my arms is a boy". The only value of this robust offstage exhibitionism is that it leads to ad-libbing on the set, and many of their best film scenes have apparently resulted from improvisation.

One has the feeling that their success as a comedy team mirrors the success of an important personal relationship. Martin, perhaps, is the safety valve, the keeper; he does not give the impression of being a natural comedian, he seems rather to participate in the gags to placate and at the same time control his partner. On the screen, at least, he is utterly sane; he is calculating where Lewis is hysterically impulsive. Without him, Lewis' infantilism, his destructive mania, might run absolutely wild. Remove the joke from any extreme form of modern American comedy and what is left usually appears rather dangerous. Meantime, Lewis is often extremely funny.

DANIEL FARSON.





# IN THE SCRIPT

## Le Plaisir

Jacques Natanson and Max Ophuls

LE PLAISIR is an adaptation of three stories by de Maupassant, *Le Masque*, *La Maison Tellier*, and *Le Modèle*. They reflect, from different aspects, the writer's view of human pleasures, and are linked by the voice of de Maupassant as narrator.

The extract printed here is from the shooting script of *La Maison Tellier*, the central and longest story. The script is technically very fluid, most of the shots being labelled "Travelling", "Panoramique" or "Plan Général", with very little indication of close shots or close-ups, medium shots or long shots. (Max Ophuls hardly ever uses a close-up.) Though Ophuls' style is extremely intricate and finished, his script is not.

Story: Madame Tellier, a brothel-owner, learns that Constance, daughter of her brother Rivet, is about to have her first communion. She closes the *maison* and takes her girls—Rosa, Raphaele, Louise, Fernande, Flora—down to Rivet's house in the country for the ceremony. The girls are deeply touched by the service, start weeping uncontrollably, and the whole church follows suit; equally moved, the curé thanks them. A feast at Rivet's house afterwards; a trip into the country; and then the train home.

Credits: Script by Max Ophuls and Jacques Natanson. Dialogue by Jacques Natanson. With Danielle Darrieux as Rosa, Jean Gabin as Rivet, Madeleine Renaud as Madame Tellier, Ginette Leclerc as Raphaele. Directed by Max Ophuls. Produced (in association with Stera Films) and distributed by Colombia Films S.A.

### INTERIOR CHURCH

#### 361. TRAVELLING.

The Tellier regiment arrives. The church is already full. Everyone turns round, cranes forward, to watch the women pass. The noise of voices stops . . .

Madame Tellier and Madame Rivet take the first pew, Rosa and the other girls the second, with Rivet. . . .



#### 365/369 PANNING-UP.

Silence. Then a little bell tinkles.

The camera comes to a stop on a statuette of the Virgin. We hear the Voice:

THE VOICE:

*The sun beating on the slates of the roof made a furnace of the little church.*

The camera follows a ray of sun-light upwards, over the crowd.

THE VOICE:

*And an anxious expectation, the coming of the ineffable mystery, gripped the hearts of the children and tightened the throats of their parents.*

(Organ music until this point).

At this moment, the camera reaches the highest of the stained glass windows, and shows a Saint stretching out his arms in a sign of benediction.

Below, the Kyrie Eleison begins.

To the rhythm of the singing, the camera descends along

the ray of light, towards the praying congregation, passes over their heads, over their prayer books and stops on Rosa.

She is kneeling and staring fixedly in front of her, into space, as she has been since the service began.

As the music dies down, we hear the Voice speaking with quiet warmth.

THE VOICE:

*It was then that Rosa suddenly remembered her mother, her village church, her first communion.*

She looks straight in front of her.

THE VOICE:

*She saw herself as she was on that day, when she was so small, almost submerged in her white dress.*

Rosa lets her head fall on her hands. She cries. She takes out her handkerchief, wipes her eyes and holds it against her nose and mouth so as not to cry out.

#### 370 TRAVELLING FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

Her two neighbours, Louise and

371 Flora, are also waiting.

372

373

374

Madame, the camera on her, in her turn has tears in her eyes; while she turns towards her sister-in-law and sees that the whole pew is crying, we hear, accompanying her look round the whole congregation, the Voice:

THE VOICE:

*Like the spark which sets off a fire across a ripe field, the tears of Rosa and her companions in a moment conquered the whole crowd: men, women, old people, young men in their new shirts, all, soon, were sobbing, and over their heads there seemed to hover something superhuman: a spirit, the prodigious breath of an invisible and all powerful being.*

The camera has returned to its starting point. It stops on Rivet who bites his lips and says gently to Rosa:

RIVET:

*There's no need to cry . . .*

And he starts sobbing.

#### 375. LONG SHOT.

The congregation sits down with a creaking of chairs.

Everyone blows his nose noisily. Then there is a great silence.

#### 376. LONG SHOT.

The priest goes to the altar steps and speaks in a low, muffled voice.

THE CURE:

*My dear brothers, my dear sisters, I thank you from the bottom of my heart . . . You have just given me the greatest happiness of my life . . . A miracle has taken place among us.*

Then in a clearer voice:

THE CURE:

*Thanks above all to you, my dear sisters . . .*

DISSOLVE

### EXTERIOR CHURCH

#### 377. LONG SHOT.

DISSOLVE

### INTERIOR CHURCH

#### 378. LONG SHOT.

(The same as No. 376).

THE CURE:

*It is enough, sometimes, that there should be one sheep chosen from the flock for the Lord to descend upon the whole. It is that grace which I wish for you. So be it.*

Organ Music.

DISSOLVE

During the dissolve, we hear the Voice.

THE VOICE:

*The feast was served in the workshop, on long boards supported by trestles.*

### RIVET'S HOUSE — INTERIOR

#### THE WORKSHOP

During the dissolve, we hear the Voice.

THE VOICE:

*Rivet was in good form and drinking too much.*

379 On the long boards supported on trestles, a generous meal

380 is served, with many empty bottles.

Loaded carts pass in the street. People pass in front of the windows, glancing inside.

The gateway to the courtyard is open.

Rivet clinks glasses with Rosa, then he taps on his glass.

RIVET:

*I want to make a speech.*



ROSA (slightly tipsy):  
*That's the fourth!*  
 MADAME:  
*That's enough, Joseph!*  
 MADAME RIVET:  
*You're drinking too much.*  
 RAPHAËLE (whispering to Rosa):  
*You too, Rosa. Pay attention.*  
 RIVET (again):  
*I want to make a speech.*



381. He gets up, not without difficulty, and begins:  
 RIVET:  
*Ladies ... I, too ... I want to thank you ...*  
 382. ALL:  
*Yes ... We know ... It's understood ...*  
 MADAME:  
*You've already told us ...*  
 383. RIVET:  
*One never says thank-you enough ... I want to thank you ... for having brought ... to this little party ... intimate, family party ... your youth ... and your beauty ...*  
 ROSA:  
*That's nice.*  
 384 {  
 385 { TRAVELLING.  
 386 {  
 MADAME (interrupting him):  
*Joseph, we must go.*  
 RIVET:  
*This isn't the moment ... I want to thank you ...*  
 MADAME:  
*Well, we thank you for having thanked us, but we must catch the train at three fifty-five ...*  
 ROSA:  
*Already?*  
 Madame Rivet serves coffee, Constance helping her.  
 CONSTANCE:  
*Oh! It's a shame ...*  
 RIVET:  
*Never! ... Never while I live! You are not going to catch the train at three fifty-five ... After the coffee, there's the wine, and after the wine there's more wine ...*  
 ROSA:  
*Bravo!*  
 RIVET:  
*... and then after that there's supper.*  
 FERNANDE:  
*Bravo!*  
 MADAME:  
*No, Joseph, there won't be any supper, or wine. It's all right to be closed for one evening, but they would never forgive us for two.*  
 RIVET:  
*I want to thank you ...*  
 387 { Madame gets up.  
 388 {  
 MADAME:  
*Well, you are going to thank us by harnessing the horses at once, while these ladies are getting ready. Go on, ladies.*  
 She claps her hands.  
 MADAME:

*Hurry up! Everyone in the salon ...*  
 She interrupts herself because of Constance and continues:  
*... Everyone downstairs in five minutes.*  
 389. The girls go off to their room.  
 ALL:  
*Yes, madame ... Very good, madame ... At once, madame ...*  
 Flora begins already to undress on the staircase.  
 MADAME:  
*Madame Flora! Manners, please!*  
 390. Madame Rivet signs to Joseph.  
 MADAME RIVET:  
*Go on, Joseph, hurry up ...*  
 391. Rivet goes out grumbling and climbs the stairs.  
 392. Camera following him.  
 RIVET:  
*It's a pity, all the same, to go off like this ... on the day of a party ... a family party ... Hey! Madame Rosa ... a family party ...*

#### CUT LIVING ROOM

393 { TRAVELLING.  
 394 { Madame Tellier and Madame Rivet enter, carrying empty cups in their hands.  
 In the background, through a glass door, we see Constance, who is clearing the table.  
 MADAME (continuing a conversation):  
*You know that everything I have will go to Constance ... But, thank God, I'm still young. We have plenty of time.*  
 MADAME RIVET:  
*No-one knows if he's going to live or die. It doesn't cost anything to make a will. What I'm saying is, it's for the child ...*  
 MADAME:  
*Listen, Marie, to remember this day by, I'm going to put a little money in the savings bank for her, and I'll send you the pass-book. For the rest ...*  
 At this moment, we hear Rosa's piercing cries, coming from the floor above, mingled with the laughter of the other girls and shouts from Rivet.  
 MADAME:  
*A moment ...*  
 395 { TRAVELLING.  
 396 { Madame quickly goes up the stairs and disappears into Rosa's room. We hear her speaking through the door.  
 397 {  
 MADAME:  
*Joseph, aren't you ashamed! What does all this mean! Go downstairs at once.*  
 The door opens and Rivet is pushed out on to the landing. He comes down the stairs putting on his jacket.  
 MADAME (appearing in the doorway):  
*What have you been doing?*  
 RIVET:  
*Nothing! I haven't done anything!*  
 398. Camera shooting upwards.  
 MADAME RIVET:  
*You were with Madame Rosa?*  
 399. Camera shooting upwards.  
 RIVET (already at the bottom of the stairs):  
*Oh! I tell you, I haven't done anything ... I wanted ... I wanted to thank her ...*

#### CUT COURTYARD

400. PANORAMIC SHOT.  
 401. Rivet comes out.  
 The camera follows him to the pump.  
 He puts his head under the water.  
 He goes on muttering.  
 RIVET:  
*It's a pity to go off like this ... I thank you ... a family party.*

#### DISSOLVE COUNTRYSIDE

During the dissolve, we hear:  
 THE VOICE:  
*At last, they started for home.*  
 402. PANORAMIC SHOT.  
 The carriage on the road.  
 The images of the journey to Rivet's house reappear, but the road is going in the opposite direction.  
 The Voice continues.



THE VOICE:

*An intoxicating light filled the flower-covered fields . . .*

403. LONG SHOT.

The cart passes through fields filled with flowers.

QUICK DISSOLVE

404. REVERSE ANGLE.

From the empty cart, stopped before a clearing.

THE VOICE:

*The women did not resist it . . .*

Rosa's voice begins.

ROSA (singing):

*Ma grand'mere un soir à la fête*

*De vin ayant bu deux doigts*

*etc. . . .*



405. LONG SHOT.

On a flower-covered slope, the women are scattered about, picking daisies and . . . taking up the song:

*. . . Combien je regrette  
Mon bras si dodu  
etc. . . .*

406. REVERSE ANGLE.

Under a tree, Madame claps her hands.

MADAME:

*Come on, ladies. We mustn't miss our train.*

407 PANORAMIC SHOT MOVING OFF THE GROUND.

408 Rosa runs . . .

409 PANORAMIC SHOT.

410 Raphaele runs . . .

411 PANORAMIC SHOT.

412 Flora runs . . .

413 REVERSE ANGLE.

The cart.

Louise and Fernande jump into the cart.

414. REVERSE ANGLE.

Rivet climbs up to his place and cracks his whip.

415 PANORAMIC SHOT.

416 The cart starts off again.

The women . . . humming:

*Ma jambe bien faite,  
Et le temps perdue.*

QUICK DISSOLVE  
THE QUARRY

417 PANORAMIC SHOT.

418 The cart passes in front of a quarry. The labourers stop working to admire the cart. One of them takes off his hat and . . . whistles the tune.

QUICK DISSOLVE  
BEHIND THE STATION

419. PANORAMIC SHOT.

420. The flower-covered cart arrives at the station.

Rivet helps the women to climb down and takes their luggage. Everyone has armfuls of flowers.

The train arrives.

421 TRAVELLING.

422 Crossing the rails, Rivet says:

423  
424

RIVET:

*It's a shame you're going: we could have had great fun.*

MADAME:

*There's a time for everything. We can't always be enjoying ourselves.*

RIVET:

*It doesn't matter. I feel very sad.*

ALL THE GIRLS (repeating it, one after another):

*Me too!*

MADAME:

*Come, come, you must be reasonable.*

(The train whistle).

Rivet begins to embrace everyone.

RIVET:

*Au revoir, Madame Fernande . . . Au revoir, Madame Louise . . . Au revoir, Madame Flora . . . Au revoir, Madame Raphaele . . . Au revoir, Madame Rosa.*

After having pressed Rosa against his chest, he remains sad for a moment.

Then, speaking to everyone:

RIVET:

*You don't know! I'm coming to see you next month!*

ALL:

*Yes! . . . That's fine! . . . Till then!*

425. The ladies have got into the train.

Madame is the last.

MADAME:

*You can come if you like, but you mustn't make a fool of yourself.*

426. THE GUARD:

*Take your places!*

427. LONG SHOT.

The train gets under way.

Everyone calls out . . .

*GOOD-BYE!*

428. The guard, the same one as on the journey there, climbs cheerfully on to the step.

429. Suddenly Rivet shouts.

RIVET:

*Rosa! Rosa!*

And he goes off suddenly, running towards the station gate.

CUT

430. Rivet at the barrier.

In a great puff of smoke and with a loud whistle the engine passes, then the carriages.

431. Through the smoke he sees someone waving a white handkerchief. It is Rosa.

RIVET:

*Au revoir, Madame Rosa, au revoir!*

432. He cracks his whip, whistling the tune that they were singing.

433. From far away, we see a white handkerchief waving at the window of the carriage. It disappears slowly.

SLOW DISSOLVE

434 PANORAMIC SHOT.

435 TRAVELLING.

436 Rivet's cart on the road going home. Rivet whistles sadly, putting the flowers in his hat and on his whip.

FADE





# POETRY IN FAST AND MUSICAL MOTION

Douglas Newton



Gene Kelly in his fast and musical Broadway Melody style ballet in "Singin' in the Rain".

**T**HE fact of the cinema's being based on photography gives it a peculiar connection with certain experiences.

Someone once said: "Everyone now and again sees as the artist does; it is the fact that he sees in that way all the time which makes him an artist". He was talking about those moments everybody knows, when an image, a sound, a gesture, takes on a meaning that it never has otherwise. It is the unique power of photography that by capturing images as it does, it snaps up this kind of raw poetry at the source. At the same time, this sets the bounds of photography's aesthetic powers, because it is the artist's job to work his way through quantities of this raw poetry, which is simply the substance of his art. (Thomas Hardy is one of the few great poets who has succeeded in transmuting it directly into actual poetry). Photography is not an art; it is something between art and life; but it is precisely this equivocal incompleteness which gives photographs their teasing fascination.

This "raw poetry" of course crops up often in films; almost every movie one sees has an image in which it somehow magically lives; in many of them, because no one has thought about it much, it just happens, accidentally, as it does from day to day. But since the essence of films is that they continue, these moments can be planned to extend into whole episodes. At these times a film can produce, with a brilliant effect of spontaneity, an image which enchants us by the ambiguity of its emotion. In doing so, it triggers off a complex of our own emotions which may not be analysable, but which are like those produced by poetry. The dormitory procession in *Zéro de Conduite* is one of them. Superficially it can be taken as a jibe, a sticking out of the tongue at the church; but what we feel as we see it, what arouses wonder, is its essential seriousness—for the child in the chair is really a holy figure at the same time, so what we feel must be at least awe and malice mixed.

*Zéro de Conduite* was made by a genius; but compare the procession scene with one from a film born without a silver spoon: the scene in *Show Boat* in which the superb Ava Gardner drags "Can't help loving that man" to a protracted and quivering end. As her song finishes, three negroes lying

on the lower deck pick up the tune with a fragile hotness and a quick beat. The whole tempo suddenly changes: the scene switches from close-ups to long shots. Julie encouraging Magnolia (Kathryn Grayson), the two girls dance to the music; one fair, gauche and breathless; the other dark, accomplished, affectionate yet with a mocking sway to her whole body. The scene is a surprise, a bonus after the strained emotion of the solo, but along with its freshness and gaiety goes an undercurrent of mystery. This complication of emotion is certainly poetic, and in its way no less effective than Vigo's.

Vigo's scene is also essentially as much a dance as *Show Boat's*; it is the formalisation a dance entails which raises the poetic temperature of musicals. Not all musicals, need one add?—but a number of Hollywood ones have given their audience many of the things they expect from poetry, have actually provided a sort of visual equivalent of poetry. The enormous scenas of early musicals like *Whoopie!* or *Broadway Melody* (revived today with some nostalgia and a little irony in *Singin' in the Rain*) were as cumbersome as the performing elephants at Bertram Mills'. Poetry comes in with the films in which the dances are part of the story; a kind of film of which Minnelli and Gene Kelly are the acknowledged masters: it amazes one to see how again and again they succeed in their enormous tasks of organisation with the air of children pulling the prize out of the lucky dip. Indeed Kelly, so like a handsome, virile penguin with a sense of humour, is one of the small number of Hollywood's actors who have poetic presences.

One poetic actor doesn't make a poetic film, however; nor does a poetic scene. For the pervading attraction of musicals we have to look further. The fact is that the musical has deep roots in myth and sentiment, in all that the average man feels as poetic. These films are the modern equivalent of pastoral poetry, which fulfils an important need but is no longer provided by poets. They present a nostalgic world which may be witty but is all the same essentially innocent and uncorrupt, and is inhabited by beings who are always charming and beautiful. Occasionally interrupted by harpies or dirty old men, their loves are always successful in the long run. The





The unexpected image. Kathryn Grayson and Ava Gardner in "Show Boat".

main differences between the old and the new pastorals is that now Arcadia is wherever the music plays, and that rustic poverty has no part in them—they have performed an extraordinary feat for our time; they have taken the curse off financial success.

But the musical goes deeper still in childhood desires, for it is nearly always possible to detect in its plot parallels to the typical situations of folklore and nursery stories. *On the Town* is a story of the Search for the Princess, like the story of Prince Kamar al-Zamam and the Princess Budur in the "Arabian Nights"; and like *An American in Paris* and *Singin' in the Rain* it has many earmarks of the Cinderella story as well. In an imitation-American musical made in Britain, *Happy Go Lovely*, we can find the Disguised Prince in the form of the Scottish millionaire whom the heroine takes to be a humble journalist. It would be a mistake to dismiss the impulse behind this with an easy comment about wish-fulfilment; these films are in the most classic line of entertainment that exists.

At the same time they deal in situations and attitudes we think of as essentially modern, and that have already acquired an almost mythological status. One of these is the "lonely" hero. When the hero finds himself isolated, his loneliness is exploited with a tenderness which often slips over into sentimentality through its streak of self-pity. The solitary man drops easily into the role of man against destiny—always a poetic figure—and his situation is usually due to unrequited love. It is a glamour which has been especially Astaire's—remember his courtship dance on sand in the room above Ginger Rogers' in *Top Hat*. It can also be the situation of man isolated in the city, that favourite character of our time.

The city is of course one of the great elements of the musical. Because audiences have been brought up on the happy, however mistaken, belief that films reproduce reality, the musicals also must have ostensibly "real" settings. The characters have to be based on the modern world, or a familiar period of the past; and as a result the musicals are among the rare poetic works so far to accept big city life without using it simply as decorative detail or a satirical target.

A good deal of the quality of *On The Town* springs from its joyful acceptance of taxis, apartment life, and the lyrical aspect of townscapes. The wonderful slow opening of the film, New York in the early morning sunlight, is intensely idyllic in mood and poetic in quality. The premise of *On The Town* is that God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world, and the world's New York. It is as valid as the more detached view of *The Naked City*, because it manages to transform the facts into raw poetry. The images of *On The Town* show that its creators are the Poets Laureate of New York in a way that Hart Crane, who tried, failed to be, and that no one has yet managed to be for London.

It follows naturally that the makers of musicals should have turned to fashion as an ally. The musical is at the opposite end of the scale from whatever is hick; it is an urban product designed to please the townsman—and a pretty sophisticated townsman at that, armed with the waspish American sense of elegance. The "Primitive Man" song and dance sequence in *On The Town* is amazingly bold not so much in its use of primitive art as in its assumption of knowledge and intelligence in its audience. One remembers too the costumes designed for Minnelli's *The Pirate* by Tom Keogh, who was for a time Berard's successor on *Vogue*. All in all, these films seem like the incarnations of some fabulous fashion magazine, as though *Vogue* or *Harper's Bazaar* had done the impossible, opened their offices into the street and walked into everyone's life. (Remember too the almost black-and-white fancy dress ball in *An American in Paris*, the 'twenties fashion parade in *Singin' in the Rain*). The climate of these films is a luxury of material things, matched with the gaiety which is the luxury of the spirit.

The taste and ease of these musicals turns what could be merely glamour into something journalists have been writing about for years: the poetry of elegance. Passages in some of them have something of the spirit of Proust when he describes the Duchesse de Guermantes at the opera. The difference is that Proust's image is essentially static, while the American's is in rapid, even violent, motion. It is a contrast of temperaments which *An American in Paris* displays very neatly: Guetary appears in the new show on a flight of stairs surrounded by a sprawling bevy of odalisques, whose extreme of activity is a few hesitating steps upstairs or downstairs. Whenever Kelly, on the other hand, goes into action he is all over the place: on the piano, over the chairs, up the corridor and down the street, using as props whatever comes under hand or foot.

Thus the musical film performs the important function of creating a modern myth. It draws on situations and character which are deeply connected with poetry, and puts them in familiar if transformed settings. Using the sort of material it does, it always has overtones of poetry, concentrating at times to points of intensity which have behind them all the weight of vitality, music, elegance and personal beauty. The particular associations this poetry draws on bring us back, too, to the appeal of the particular image or moment, like the one in *Show Boat*, where the kind of experience suddenly



"On The Town".  
Ann Miller in the  
"Primitive Man" number.



heightened, transformed into poetry, is something to which we quickly respond.

Other kinds of film poetry certainly exist; the musical is something quite different. The way it unconsciously (in part, at least) falls into a great tradition, gives it an authenticity

which means that it is the least pretentious and most genuine poetic film which has yet been produced. That musicals are superficially designed only as entertainment should blind nobody to the kind of entertainment they really are, and the heights they really reach.

## The Seventh Art

One of the strangest international film festivals in cinema history is being prepared by M. Gilles Wolman, producer of the so-called "anti-concept" film. M. Wolman's festival involves only unreleased films, and will be held after midnight "in a cinema theatre in France or Europe, the name of which will be announced only at the last minute to the specialised Press." The producer denies that his semi-clandestine festival will concern pornographic, political or tendentious films, but simply miscellaneous "unpublished" ones. Some of the titles: *The Golden Age* and *Howls in Favour of Sade*.

—(*Continental Daily Mail*).

\*

Small, undersized boys were apparently among the most devoted (film) "fans"—the proportion of attenders at age 17 among boys less than 54 inches tall on leaving school was 92.7 per cent, whereas the proportion of attenders among boys 61 inches or more in height was 83.4 per cent.—(*The Young Wage-Earner*, by T. Ferguson and J. Cunlison).

Am I alone in thinking Gene Kelly should stick to acting rather than dancing?—(Letter to *Picturegoer*).

\*

... Nevertheless, he is obsessed by the memory of the pig-headed girl with the seductive glance.—(Synopsis of *La Marie du Port* for the Press).

\*

Many fashionable names have been left out of this year's New York Social Register . . . Society people who have been dropped have married Hollywood stars during the year. Among them is millionaire New Yorker Mortimer Hall, who married Ruth Roman . . . Another removed is Mrs. Grant Harkness, who married actor Robert Montgomery.—(*Evening Standard*).

\*

*Cyrano de Bergerac*—Strictly for the birds. The worst thing that ever happened to a small town exhibitor was Stanley Kramer, but the long hairs love him.—(Showman's report in "What the Picture did for Me"—*Motion Picture Herald*).



## THE SULKY FIRE (2)

*In the January-March issue of SIGHT AND SOUND we began a discussion on the current predicament of documentary film-making in Britain. It was interrupted in our last issue to pay tribute to the Crown Film Unit. The discussion was opened by Basil Wright and Brian Smith; the former suggested that documentary could only be revitalised by an individual "sense of adventure" and an attack on the "sponsorship bastions": the latter believed that a revival of humanist convictions on the part of film-makers was essential.*

*STUART LEGG, who contributes another view of the problem, has worked in British documentary since the early days of the Empire Marketing Board. He was Chief Producer to the National Film Board of Canada during its formative years, and made for it the "World In Action" series. After the War he joined the Crown Film Unit, resigning in 1950 to engage in scripting and production in a private capacity.*

### STUART LEGG

It is said that in the 30's British documentary opened up the themes of civics and civic reform, and thereby established a position for itself in the leadership of national thinking. It is also said that glossiness of presentation, concern with technical knitting, and so on, have now largely taken the place of the big themes; and that accordingly the reputation for leadership of thought is being lost. This is attributed by some to the film-makers, by some to the sponsors, and by some (though they do not openly say so) to lack of Grierson.

No doubt there is partial truth in all these analyses. But I think there is another reason too. Much of what documentary was advocating in the '30s has now come to pass—not only by social sanction, but by legislation. The pleas of a minority have gained majority acceptance. There are few things better calculated to take the wind out of an activist minority's sails and reduce it to frustrated impotence—or complacent acceptance. Added to this is the fact that social sanctions, exciting enough to chase as screen dreams in the 30's, became tedious when seen in the light of legal and administrative actuality in the late '40s.

If this is true, documentary ought at present to be looking for a new point of departure—for the themes which it is urgent to bring forward now because they will become crucial tomorrow. To the extent to which it foresees these coming needs and focuses attention on them, it should stand to regain its reputation as a leader of thought.

Various themes have been advanced as relevant, among them colonial evolution, industrial society, the Western relationship. All these seem to me to be parts of a far wider whole, which has its source in Britain, but which involves, as well, consideration of our relationships everywhere in the world.

It is a platitude that this country is entering a period of enormous, swift and radical change. But almost no one, so far as I can see, is taking a lead in preparing the country's thinking for it. In nearly every field of activity the symptoms of developing change have made themselves apparent, often in an unpleasant form; and remedies of a disjointed, makeshift, shoring-up nature have been applied. In the process of plugging these successive holes appearing in the national structure, exhortation has become a part of the remedial formula. Thus official documentary has found itself harnessed to the pleas for harder work necessitated by dollar gaps, trade deficits, dwindling reserves; to the reviling of Luddite tendencies associated with restrictive practices; to the publicising of (hastily) revised colonial policies; to beseeching under-developed strangers to adopt democracy before it is too late; to giving assurance that authority is as foxed as anybody else in the matter of formulating the new industrial order; to emphasising the comforting hopes which science holds out for replacing materials suddenly in short supply. One could multiply the list interminably.

Perhaps most of these pictures have been unimpressive because (like many of the measures which evoke them) they scratch in a separate piecemeal fashion at a single, integral (or should I say *spherical*) truth? Similarly, the measures have been disjointed and makeshift because there is little national sanction to go to the deeper root of the matter. Propaganda remains the pacemaker of policy; in the wider sense of creating awareness of the change that is enveloping us all, there has—no doubt for the best short-term reasons—been little propaganda worth talking about.

It may be that the violent oscillations in foreign policy derive at least in part from the same lack of national sanction to face the single, overall reality of our changing position. Are we offering guns or butter? A whiff of grape or a shot of serum? With the right hand or the left? We withdraw the one and hold out the other with bewildering rapidity. And again, there has been little propaganda worth talking about.

Here is one recent statement of the question, incomplete and wrongly emphasised, but serving the point: "How is our island community, dangerously concentrated in a few urban areas, vitally dependent on what we can import from abroad in peace or war to satisfy our simplest needs, enjoying a standard of life immensely privileged compared with that possessed by the greater part of humanity—how is this island, precariously poised upon a delicately planned economic mechanism, to survive in the latter part of the 20th century when none of the sources of material power from which we derived our strength, neither the Navy, nor supremacy in the financial field, nor our lead in craftsmanship, nor our political dominion, still remains, when not one of these things will ever return to us again?"

Perhaps the greatest "service and loyalty" that the British people can perform now towards ourselves and towards the world is to face this truth of their changing position *as a whole*, and to seek its constructive resolution *as a whole*. History is saying softly but distinctly, "Yesterday's over your shoulder"; and unless we stop generally winding up the escape mechanisms, we might find ourselves fulfilling Homer Lea's remark about nations not advancing boldly to their doom but retreating to it step by step.

Three stages would seem to be involved. First, a frank appreciation of the size and scale of coming change; then, acceptance and study of its implications; then, the shaping of the future on a basis of understood and accepted reality. That means, successively: recognising a number of unpleasant (but also some pleasant) facts, tied together by chains of cause and effect, past and present, so complex that we are as yet only dimly aware of them; making up our minds that the future is going to be different from the past in kind rather than degree (which may not be so unpalatable as we automatically conclude); and finally, seeing ourselves as a new kind of people with a new kind of purpose in the

(continued on page 48)





Hollywoodians in Europe. Bette Davis and William Powell in a Seine Left Bank set from one of Dieterle's early American films, "Fashions of 1934"

## EUROPEANS IN HOLLYWOOD

William Dieterle

SOME scholars, critics and motion picture fans like to regard the European films of the early twenties as representing the highest standard of motion picture production. Films such as *Atonement of Gosta Berling*, *Variety*, *Un Carnet de Bal*, and *Potemkin* were generally hailed as masterpieces, and their directors soon were lured to Hollywood by attractive Hollywood offers. But in the new environment much of their genius seemed to flounder. Their pictures reflected little of the spirit of their European work and many returned disappointed to their native countries; among them, Maurice Stiller, Victor Sjöström, Sergei Eisenstein, Julien Duvivier, René Clair and Ewald Dupont.

Inevitably their failure produced recrimination, charges of temperament from the American side of the Atlantic, the cry of lack of appreciation from the European shore. Regardless of the viewpoint with which one concurs, the Hollywood misadventures of such original film creators has resulted in a great loss to motion pictures and by no means parenthetically, to themselves.

The convenient explanation blames Hollywood entirely, using all the stereotyped arguments of gross commercialism, stupidity in high places, "the system" *per se*. An attitude of objectiveness places the analyst in the uncomfortable position of seeming to straddle the issue. However, the fact remains that there are two sides to the issue when it is stripped of the emotionalism that invariably tinges controversy about the arts.

I am not a "squirmer" nor a "straddler" but as a director who has worked happily and individualistically in European studios and enthusiastically within the framework of the Hollywood system I am capable of seeing good in both methods. Each has merit, each occupies a valid position in the international motion picture scheme, each deserves respect.

Hollywood frequently has been accused of nursing a mass inferiority complex induced by its emphasis on quantity rather than quality films, a condition that invites patronizing. Too little note is taken of Hollywood's gigantic accomplishment in transforming the "flickers" of early days into a world-scale people's entertainment, inexpensive diversion for the masses. With its exciting star personalities, vast publicity machinery, flare for colourful showmanship and superior technical resources, Hollywood has spread the influence of film to the four corners of the globe, creating a huge industrial structure manifested in the thousands of theatres across the hemispheres where thirty years ago there were none. Hollywood alone, among the production centres, supplies the major portion of the flow that keeps the doors of these theatres open. Actually, sporadic native production is indebted to Hollywood for its means of reaching the public, the theatre.

With the global expansion of American films there necessarily has grown the "system of Hollywood production", a more polite description than mechanization. The shipping date, the day a picture is scheduled to go into release, has become the supreme arbiter of creative effort; the budget and shooting schedule, its allies. Experts to carry out the "system" have been born in the form of the front office, producers and associate producers.

To the foreign director making his first picture in Hollywood this industrial approach to an art form is alien to his previous experience. He is baffled by the hugeness of the studios, the amazing efficiency, the rigidity with which the budget and shooting schedule are controlled, the cool atmosphere of impersonality. He discovers he is only one of many directors, and like them, responsible to a producer who holds the power to change the script, often to veto the director's interpretation, choose players and who assumes final control of the editing. This contrasts dramatically with the European tradition where the director's authority is unquestioned and his creative freedom permits him to make his own schedule on a flexible budget.

Overwhelming is the one word description of his reaction to the Hays office with its code of morals and manners. It exists nowhere else, and acceptance of its restrictions is a matter of conditioning. Hardly a Hollywood director exists who, at one time or another, has not dreamed of tearing the code to shreds. For purposes of expediency we accept the system of self regulation as the most effective device for combatting state and local censorship in America.

This acquiescence to localism contains an important clue to the psychology behind Hollywood's mode of mass production. It is international in scope and just as the individual film must be acceptable morally in varied geographical points, it must also be acceptable as entertainment. The European director, accustomed to making pictures for his own country, sometimes fails to grasp this fundamental point. He seems incapable of visualizing the larger audience for whom he "is playing."

With restrictions descending upon him from every side the European director naturally becomes frustrated. Automatically, he undertakes the hopeless challenge of "changing things." He questions "the system" and fumes helplessly



when he discovers he cannot completely mould it to his own concept of individualistic film making. The frustrations he creates in his own mind are as much responsible for his inability to do his best work as the conditions imposed by Hollywood. His failure, if he takes it seriously (and who doesn't?) becomes an excuse for Hollywood to bear another tongue-lashing. Hasty retreat to home territory follows; everyone is sorry, everyone is bitter.

It would require the wisdom of Solomon to set down infallible rules by which an acceptable compromise between the two systems might be reached, and my own observations, culled from twenty years in Hollywood, hardly fall into this category. However my experience has been that by persistence in my work, by accepting and making the best of assignments as they have come, I have occasionally enjoyed the pleasure of pure creative expression. *Zola*, *Pasteur*, *Juarez*, *All That Money Can Buy* and *Boots Malone* are a few cases in point.

If, in the intimacy of my drawing room, I rail against the Hollywood system of mass production, I confess considerable respect for it during working hours at the studio. In its pursuit of efficiency, quicker, more economical ways of making movies, Hollywood has developed the backlot as its unique and considerable contribution to the celluloid art. Here are the real geniuses, technical craftsmen unsurpassed in ability and constantly on the alert to improve their skills. They provide a bulwark the director enjoys nowhere else in the world.

In Europe the director is faced constantly with the problem of training new workers because too few pictures are made to sustain a crew for any length of time. It is impossible for the technical workers to attain the high degree of talent and coordination that in Hollywood is accepted as commonplace.

As for the restrictions on imaginative film creation by the speed-up process, production control and censorship, they are not insurmountable barriers to artistic integrity. Time and experience can hurdle them more effectively than snarling and gnashing of teeth. Surely the works of Ernst Lubitsch form their own testimony of his quiet, whimsical way of forging his own imprint on Hollywood. Lubitsch possessed the subtlety to dazzle the censors into seeing one thing, believing another. His was compromise on the most intelligent level—beating the "opposition" at its own game.

I think the European director should come to Hollywood in a frame of mind to take the best from Hollywood and give his best, ignoring, even when it hurts, the petty irritations imposed by the impersonal handling of pictures. Eventually, if he gains a reputation as co-operative and craftsmanlike, he may be allowed fuller freedom of expression. And it isn't altogether a hit or miss proposition. I held the story and production outline of *Zola* on my desk for two years before it was finally approved; my faith in the subject eventually wore down the resistance of the studio. But its success paved the way for the several screen biographies that followed. Diplomatic finesse may not seem to be a part of the director's equipment, but to close one's eyes to its advantages is the sheerest folly. For my part I see no difference in stalking a Hollywood executive for the privilege of making a notable film than in stalking individuals and financial institutions for money as European directors must constantly do.

With a sense of humour, patience and hard work one can make pictures of high artistic standard in Hollywood.

Freedom of creation among the directors of Europe may become the exception rather than the rule. A knowledge of the tricks of their Hollywood confrères can be very useful.

# A GREAT FILM

## Guillaume Apollinaire

Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), a charming and original writer and one of the first "modern" poets, was also a film fan. Born of a Polish mother and an Italian father, his family moved to France during his boyhood and as a young man in Paris he made the acquaintance of Picasso, Vlaminck, Max Jacob, Braque, Dufy and others. In 1906, with Matisse, he christened a new movement in painting Cubism; in 1913 he was praising American westerns for their breadth and movement. One of his prose works, "The Stories and Adventures of the Baron of Ormesan," is a series of anecdotes concerning an adventurer as eccentric as Apollinaire himself; and one of the Baron's adventures is in film production, in the pioneer days of 1901.

"A Great Film" is reprinted by permission of The Harvill Press: it appears in "Selected Writings of Guillaume Apollinaire," translated with a critical introduction by Roger Shattuck.

"Who doesn't have a crime on his conscience?" asked the Baron of Ormesan. "I don't count them any more myself. I have committed a few, and they have brought me a certain amount of money. And if I am not a millionaire today, my appetites are more at fault than my scruples."

"In 1901 I had set up with some friends the International Cinematographic Company, which we called for short the ICC. We obtained films of special interest and then gave cinema showings in the principal cities of Europe and America. Our program was very well organized. Thanks to the indiscretion of a *valet de chambre*, we had been able to obtain an interesting scene showing the President of the Republic getting up in the morning. We had similarly filmed the birth of the Prince of Albany. But as the greatest prize of all, however, we had, by corrupting a few of the Sultan's functionaries, recorded in all its movements and for all time the impressive tragedy in which the Grand Vizer, Melak-Pacha, after a heartrending farewell to his wife and children, drank the drugged coffee, as his master had ordered, on the terrace of his house at Pera."

"We lacked only the performance of a crime. But the moment of a crime is never known in advance, and it is rare that criminals act openly."

"Despairing of procuring such a spectacle by lawful means, we decided to organize one in a villa which we rented in Auteuil. We had thought at first of engaging actors to act out the crime we needed, but beyond the fact that we would be deceiving our future spectators in offering them faked scenes, and accustomed as we were to filming only reality, we could not be satisfied by a simple theatrical game, however perfect. We thus had the idea of drawing lots among ourselves to see who would have to resign himself to committing the crime which the camera would record. But this prospect pleased no one. We were, as it happened, a group of honest men, and no one wished to lose his honor even for a commercial purpose."

"One night we lay in wait at the corner of a deserted street near the villa we had rented. There were six of us, all armed with revolvers. A couple passed. They were a young man and a young woman whose strange manner of dress seemed to us to furnish the interesting elements of a sensational crime. Silently we descended on them, bound them and took them to the villa. We left them there guarded by one of our number. We went back into ambush, and a gentleman with white whiskers and evening clothes appeared. We stopped him and took him to the villa despite his resistance. The sight of our revolvers got the better of his courage and his shouts. Our cameraman set up his machine, arranged a suitable light, and prepared to record



the scene. Four of us stood next to the photographer and covered our three captives with our revolvers. The young man and woman had fainted. I undressed them with touching attention. I opened the woman's skirt and bodice and left the man in his shirt-sleeves. Then I spoke to the man in evening clothes.

"Sir, my friends and I do not mean you any harm. But we require you at the price of death to kill with this dagger which I place at your feet, this man and woman. You must try, first of all, to revive them. Take care that they do not overpower you. Since they are not armed, there is no doubt that you can carry it off."

"Sir," the future assassin said to me politely, "one must yield to force. Your decision has been made, and I do not wish to try to make you give up a resolve whose explanation is not clear to me, but I ask you only one favor: allow me to wear a mask."

"We agreed and realised that it would be better for him as well as for us that he be masked. I tied over his face a handkerchief in which I made holes for his eyes, and the fellow began his work."

"He slapped the hands of the young man. Our machine was going and recorded this dismal scene."

"The assassin, with the point of his dagger, pricked his victim in the arm. The young man jumped to his feet and threw himself on the back of his attacker with a strength increased by his fright. There was a short struggle. The young woman also came to and rushed to help her friend. But she fell first, struck in the heart by a blow of the dagger. Then it was the turn of the young man. He subsided at last with his throat cut. The assassin had done well. The handkerchief had not been disarranged during the struggle. He kept it on as long as the machine functioned."

"Are you satisfied, gentlemen?" he asked. "And may I neaten myself up now?"

"We congratulated him; he washed his hands, combed his hair and brushed himself off."

"Then the camera stopped."

"The assassin waited for us to obliterate the traces of our presence because of the police who would not fail to be there the next day. We left together. The assassin took leave of us like a man of the world. He returned in haste to his friends, for doubtless he would win that same evening, after such an adventure, a fabulous amount of money. We bid this gambler goodnight and thanked him, and then went home to bed."

"We had our sensational crime."

"It had tremendous publicity. The victims were the wife of a minister of a little Balkan state and her lover, the son of the pretender to the throne of a north German principality."

"We had rented the villa under a false name, and the agent, to avoid trouble, identified the young prince as his tenant. The police were up in the air for two months. The newspapers put out special editions and, since we had begun our showing, you can imagine our success. The police never believed for a moment that we were offering the real version of the murder of the day. We took care, however, to announce it prominently. And the public was not deceived. We had an enthusiastic welcome, and, as much in Europe as in America, we profited enough after six months to distribute to the members of our association 342,000 francs."

"Since the crime was too well known to go unpunished, the police finally arrested a man from the Levant who could not produce a valid alibi for the night of the crime. In spite of his protests he was sentenced to death and executed. Once again we had luck. Our cameraman was able, by a rare chance, to be present at the execution, and we strengthened our program with a new scene well suited to draw a crowd."

"When, at the end of two years, our association dissolved for reasons I shall not go into, I had almost reached a cool million, which I lost again on the races the next year."

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LONGMANS



## BOOKS

### THE BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY, a Report by PEP (Political and Economic Planning, 18s.)

*Reviewed by Harold Wilson \**

It is remarkable, in view of the great interest which the film industry always commands, and the public intervention which has been necessary in its affairs, that so little is generally known about it. The PEP report, which sets out to remedy this lack of knowledge, is far and away the best study so far produced of the industry; its history, organisation and economics. It is well-informed, thorough and detailed and, so far as one person can judge, remarkably accurate. Its diagnosis of the problems the industry is facing is sound and well-balanced: the disappointment comes in its concluding chapter, when it follows most other commentators, in Parliament and elsewhere, in stating the problems without finding itself able to make any recommendations.

Nearly a third of the Report is devoted to the history of the industry from its earliest days, bringing into sharp focus the development of the three salient features of the industry today: the dominant position occupied by the large-scale integrated groups, the extent of American interests in production and distribution, and the scale and nature of Government intervention and support. Part Two, "The Topical Background," provides an account of the structure of the production industry and the main groups, of the pattern of cinema ownership, of the power of American interests in the market, and Governmental relations with the industry. It concludes with a useful comparative study of the problems of native industries in other countries. Part Three, outlining the operations of the industry, deals with cinema-going habits and the pattern of cinema management, before going on to deal with the economics of the industry, the role of the distributor, overseas earnings, and finally, the provision of finance.

The three most important sections deal with the record of Government intervention, the role of the distributor and the finance of film production. The Report fairly describes four stages in the development of Government intervention. At first, from the 1909 Act, it was concerned solely with the physical safety of cinema audiences. Secondly, came the "stage of quasi-temporary protection", from 1927 to 1938, by which time "it had become apparent that protection in some form or other must be permanent". The third stage, from 1938 to 1948, covered the war period and rehabilitation of the industry; but it was a period also in which it became clear that protection was not enough. In the fourth stage the Government was much more closely concerned with the fortunes of the industry. The balance of payments, the 1947 import duty and Hollywood boycott, and the need to revise the 1938 quota act, in any event forced a reconsideration of Government policy; the growth—and weakness—of great combines, together with the financial crisis in the industry made a much closer relationship between Government and industry inevitable. The form and extent of this intervention are now as central a feature of the industry's organisation as American predominance and the power of the distributor—and may perhaps be as lasting. The Report endorses the view expressed on all sides in recent House of Commons debates that an almost complete collapse of British film production would have occurred if Government financial aid had not been forthcoming in and from 1948. At the present time by far the greater part of production, through British Lion, through independents and the three special Groups, is financed directly or indirectly by the State Corporation. And the Report emphasises, what is clear from the latest Annual Reports of the N.F.F.C., that the Corporation has had a marked and healthy effect in reducing production costs and keeping them within budget.

It shows, too, the central part played by Entertainment Tax in the finances of the industry and trade as a whole, though it puts the effects of the tax on the fortunes of the producers in proper perspective when it points out the small gain to producers of a given reduction in the incidence of the tax at the box-office. Hence the so-called Eady Plan which siphons off a definite proportion of

additional box-office revenue and channels it, through the Film Production Fund, to the producers. It is this scheme, together with the reduction in production costs, which causes the authors of the Report to conclude that British production is at last within reach of solvency. But they point out that both N.F.F.C. and the Eady Plan are scheduled to come to an end in 1954. It is therefore essential, if they are not to be continued, to have an effective long-term plan for the industry ready by that time.

It is in the elaboration of such a plan, or indeed any development of present policy, that the authors of the Report confess defeat. The defects of the present system of distribution and finance are clearly set out. Virtually no first feature film can be made without a prior guarantee of circuit distribution. The statutory Tribunal can provide a circuit outlet for a satisfactory film once made, but who is likely, save in very exceptional circumstances, to finance production without prior assurance of a circuit release? The stranglehold on the industry possessed by the distributor is clearly described, as are the distributor's own problems and difficulties. The weakness of the circuit system is described, and the relatively minor improvements proposed in the Plant Report shortly dismissed: the solution—the Report is surely right—does not lie in the promotion of greater competition in individual towns and cities. On the other hand, the Report is perhaps over-hasty in dismissing the idea of a Fourth Circuit. If in fact, as many acute observers feel, the producer's problem lies partly in the lack of adequate competition between the circuits, it is surprising that consideration is not given not to the divorce of production from distribution (certainly a useless proposal) but to the separation of the two major circuits which are at present under common ownership. Is a partial answer not to be found perhaps in the creation not of a *fourth*, but of a genuinely independent *third*, circuit?

Another line of enquiry which is prematurely closed is the future of quota protection. I have many doubts now about our wisdom in entering into international agreements to bar renter's quota and to substitute a system of screen quotas. Should we not, perhaps, seek an agreement with the United States Government, as well as Hollywood, for a return to renter's quota?

These questions will have to be answered if we are to work out any long-term policy for the industry. But no foreseeable change in the structure of the industry, or in its methods of protection against imported products, will remove the need for a continuation of *both* the Eady Plan and the N.F.F.C., in some form or another, long after 1954. The Film Production Levy provides a short and effective gastro-enterostomy to channel box-office revenue direct to the producer. A films bank to provide capital, and to exercise central control over the finances of the industry, will, whatever its ultimate form of operation, be required as a permanent feature of the industry. For, to quote the concluding words of the Report, "If the public considers it desirable for political, cultural or economic reasons that British films should be produced, then it must be prepared for the Government not only to protect the industry indefinitely, but also to aid it financially for as far ahead as can be seen."

### NATIONAL FILM LIBRARY CATALOGUE. Part 1: Silent News Films, 1895-1933. (British Film Institute, 17/6)

*Reviewed by James Laver*

It is recorded that the wise Chinese were in the habit of destroying the graves of their ancestors at every change of dynasty, and this they did, they said, lest the whole of China should become a graveyard. The method sounds drastic but perhaps the principle is sound, for if every record were kept the whole world would become a museum. It is perhaps fortunate that the early records of any art tend to get destroyed. What survives, survives by chance, and from it later scholars have to strive to build up a coherent picture.

Early films are in exactly the same case as early manuscripts. The survivors have been chosen by chance, or fate, as arbitrarily as survivors of a shipwreck, and it is a fascinating process to look through this catalogue of early films in the National Film Library. For here is something quite new; the "living image" in a quite new sense, and for the first time in history, of the people and events of half a century ago. The very first item shows a photographic congress in France in July 1895, and it is followed by films of Ranjitsinhji batting and Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The film historians should copy the bibliophiles, choose the arbitrary date of 1900, instead of 1500, and dignify everything that comes before it with the proud title of "Incunables".

(\*Harold Wilson was President of the Board of Trade from October 1947 to April 1951, during which time the British film industry passed through the most acute period of its post-war crisis: the negotiation of the Anglo-American film agreement of 1948, the passing of the 1948 Cinematograph Film Act, The setting up of the N.F.F.C. and of the British Film Production Fund took place during these years).





1910. MASS MEETING OF SUFFRAGETTES, in Trafalgar Square: placards advertising the numerical support given to the National Union of Women's Suffragette Societies by the menfolk of various British cities. (PATHE)

What precious glimpses we get of late Victorian and Edwardian times, pictures of a period as remote from our own as that of Christopher Columbus; Lord Roberts inspecting the National Reserve, or a Mass Meeting of Suffragettes; royal funerals, sporting events and funny hats. And all these were selected not by conscious intention but by the mere chance of survival.

It is really a wonder that any of them have survived at all. To quote the words of Mr. Lindgren's admirable introduction: "The cellulose nitrate stock so far used by the film industry is highly inflammable, as well as being bulky, onerous and expensive to store; film companies therefore tend to destroy all film considered to be commercially valueless. Finally, even where film is kept, the cellulose nitrate will become unstable and break down within thirty, forty, or fifty years . . . Unless a deliberate attempt is made to preserve it, therefore, the life of a cinematograph film is likely to be brief."

Now, of course, thanks to the British Film Institute, a deliberate attempt is made to preserve films, but it is impossible to preserve everything; hence the Selection Committee under whose guidance the National Film Library has, since 1935, acquired many thousands of titles. But all this is outside the scope of the present catalogue, which stops short when the film begins to talk.

The Library has grown to such an extent since 1938, when the first complete catalogue appeared, that the work has now to be issued in several volumes. It is hoped that the publication of further volumes will not long be delayed, but perhaps none of these can hope to compete with the "period charm" of the present one. It only remains to say that the work has been done in a methodical and scholarly manner, and should be in the possession of everyone interested not only in the history of the film but in the social history of the century.

**GOOD COMPANY** by Mary Field. (Longmans Green & Co., 12/6.)

*Reviewed by Stanley Reed*

The name of Mary Field is so closely linked in the public mind with the making of films for children that it is hard to believe that the idea was not hers in the first place. The opening line of her book, however, recalls that it came from Mr. Rank and that she herself accepted the unexpected task only after trying "every form of evasion I could think of on the spur of the moment." True, the original modest plan developed tremendously in Mary Field's hands during the six years' span of Children's Entertainment Films. Mr. Rank had asked for ten-minute story films to do the children good: Miss Field's strictly empirical approach soon revealed that you can neither tell a satisfying film story in ten minutes nor do children good by interlarding unsuitable programmes with moral tales.

The problem of moral instruction was basic and it took four years to find a guiding principle. So austere were the beginnings that Tom was denied a reward for his good deed in the now historic *Tom's Ride* on the grounds that virtue provided its own, a notion which the logic of the child audience soon discredited. Mary Field, as determined a do-gooder as Mr. Rank—her sense of purpose is evident on every page of her book—felt moral didacticism neither appropriate nor effective in a Saturday Cinema Club. By 1947 the purpose was defined:

*"We set out to provide the children in the cinemas, Saturday by Saturday, with an opportunity of coming into contact with children and adults who were unconsciously good examples. The screen characters behaved well, but not too well, in circumstances into which our young audiences could readily project themselves . . . and now at last we knew where we were going."*

The title of the book sums up this positive purpose.

The story of C.E.F. is admirably told in a frankly personal style. The drive and executive flair of Mary Field as principal officer is implicit in the facts. She watched over productions in the hands of several different companies at any one time, most of them new to children's film making, she read stories, planned ahead, devised and directed research, fought for studio space and for recognition within a conservative industry of her unique problems, learned the ways of the Censor (an early film came back from Soho Square with an essential scene cut out), lectured, missioned abroad, saw to the education of her Advisory Council—a task in which she took obvious pride and delight—and gave key evidence to a succession of official committees. Whatever the frustrations of the week, Saturday morning brought reward and rededication:

*"I know of nothing more calculated to inspire a sense of awe and responsibility than to see ten or twelve hundred children's faces with eyes lifted to what you are placing on the screen before them, influencing them, you hope, but are by no means certain, for good."*

There are excellent chapters on the international possibilities of children's film production and exchange, on costs, and on the need to educate public opinion, but the core of the book is the chapter on the child audience, on which, in Britain, at least, Miss Field alone is properly equipped to write. Without ingratitude for what it contains and despite the appendix analysing Managers' Reports on typical films, one wishes it were longer. One would like to follow in detail the evidence and argument by which the all-important conclusions on children's film tastes were reached. There must be much more to say about the presentation of fantasy, for example, than is said here and more on the subject of screen illusion than the generalisation "children believe that children on the screen are real." The closing paragraph of this chapter is perhaps the most controversial in the book:

*"The problem of raising the general taste of film audiences can be solved only by raising their taste at the emotional stage of their development, between the ages of seven and eleven, by means of first-class children's entertainment films."*

Is there not here a danger of self-sufficiency? Children's film clubs do not operate in a vacuum and unless we reconcile ourselves to legislation forbidding the adult cinema to children, attendances at special performances are likely always to be a lesser part of children's total film going; even if adult films were excluded from children's performances, the dilemma would remain, as would the problem of transition to the adult cinema in early adolescence. It is regrettable that the only reference in the book to educational training in film appreciation, which should be complementary to Miss Field's work and which can help solve the problem of the relationship between the child and adult cinemas, should be out of date and misleading.

This important criticism apart, the book is recommended without reserve as a unique account of the most interesting development in British cinema since Grierson. May its results be as profound. Meanwhile, it should be forced on every ill-informed critic of Saturday Cinema Clubs and on every cinema manager who still pins his faith on the serial as the star Saturday attraction.

**THE FILM OF MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL**, by T. S. Eliot and George Hoellering. (Faber and Faber 25s.).

*Reviewed by Lindsay Anderson*

There is a regrettable air of pomposity about this book. "The film version of *Murder in the Cathedral*", says the blurb, ". . . is itself a new and important development of the art of the cinema



We believe that it deserves to be commemorated by a new kind of book of the film." Essentially, however, the conception of "The Film of *Murder in the Cathedral*" is not all that novel: it comprises two four-page prefaces by T. S. Eliot and George Hoellering, the "screenplay" of the film, forty full page photographs (mostly portraits) by Angus McBean, and eight pages of tiny frame stills. The screenplay is illustrated by artist's continuity sketches, and there are six coloured plates depicting vestments, embroidered banners, carved panels etc., designed for the production. On page 65 a line drawing reproduces "the modulations on the sound track of the film made by T. S. Eliot's voice speaking the part of the fourth tempter." The precise word or syllable in process of enunciation is not specified; the key-number is 19Y E92990.

This last item is significant. The assumption behind the whole book, one feels, is that the film is a work of such evident richness, fascination and importance that a tasteful compilation of scraps becomes automatically memorable. Mr. Eliot's modulations, the Archbishop's chess board, the portraits (an extraordinarily uninteresting collection)—these are relics. For those eager to question and study, little is provided. Mr. Eliot's preface, written in his characteristic tone of proud humility, demonstrates untroubled ignorance of the film medium. With a rather charming air of discovery he announces: "In looking at a film, we are always under direction of the eye . . ." Discussion of the differences between theatre and cinema produces the statement that: "In the theatre, the first problem to present itself is likely to be that of casting. For the Film of *Murder in the Cathedral*, Mr. Hoellering's first care was that the materials for the costumes should be woven in exactly the same way, from exactly the same materials, as they would have been in the twelfth century." Mr. Hoellering's preface also concentrates on the difference between plays and films, and lists the additions and changes (an extra first scene, and some minor reallocation of speeches) felt necessary in this case. Strangely enough, the possibility of cutting rather than expanding the text is not discussed (the knights' speeches alone are slightly abridged), nor really is the conception of the film—the reason for the choice of this particular play (beyond the fact that it is a "great dramatic poem") or the problems of visual treatment raised by Mr. Eliot's individual style of verse-writing.

Since the screenplay, as here printed, is no more than a sketchily annotated version of the play—with no precise indication of the movement of images—and the frame stills are not related to the text, the value of this book to the student is slight. It can best be regarded as a de luxe souvenir of the film for those who concur with Mr. Herbert Read in finding its appearance "an event which may have great significance for the future of both poetry and film."

# **FILM AND ITS TECHNIQUES by Raymond Spottiswoode (Faber & Faber 42s)**

*Reviewed by H. D. Waley*

This is a book which should be on the shelves of everyone connected with the production of non-theatrical films, because it collects together a wealth of valuable information nowhere else available in convenient form. In addition to being useful and compendious, it is made readable and entertaining by the author's pungent style and original viewpoint. It is particularly significant as an assessment of the present possibilities of 16 mm. film in the field of serious production.

Among the author's most original contributions to his subject a survey of little-explored animation techniques stands out. This, of course, was to be expected from his association with the National Film Board of Canada.

Sometimes, it must be admitted, his delight at having glimpsed some old problem from a slightly new angle leads him into mistaking the novel for the simple. Thus "The sound and picture projector is not an isolated mechanism; its function is to 'couple' a film into an auditory and visual space. This simply means that the light and sound energy put out by the projector must be so adapted to the physical characteristics of the space in which the audience sits that there is an efficient transfer of modulated intelligence across this space." Some readers will be grateful for this ingenious variation on a theme which could have been simplified a great deal more by normal treatment, while others may be a little irritated. It is to be feared also that some readers will feel that in this specially edited English edition of an American publication the process of Anglicisation might have been carried further. For example while an excellent diagram (on page 301) incorporates in its captions the English term "Photo-electric cell" the text on the same page describes the same object as a "photo-tube." Moreover

all prices mentioned are in dollars, and all reference numbers to standards are to American standards. The suggestions for testing 16 mm. projectors include "a test for running between 129 and 105 volts," but do not include any reference to our normal current, nor, incidentally, to the test-films made in this country.

The fact that some types of apparatus of British manufacture, such as the Parkinson Editola, get no mention also detracts from the completeness of this section of the book. It is not suggested that the author has a pro-American bias. If members of the British Kinematograph Society feel chastened by the view that their Journal "occasionally publishes an interesting paper," they can console themselves by finding a few back-handers aimed at their American colleagues, such as—"while Hollywood and other world film centers have made a legend of their technical progress, it has not in reality been very spectacular when compared with the development of, let us say, nuclear physics and antibiotics."

There is something very refreshing about so much candour and some interesting revelations sprinkle the pages. Probably many readers will feel an agreeable shudder down the spine when told that the Petzval-type lenses frequently used on 16 mm. projectors suffer so acutely from field curvature that, in cases investigated, the shape of the sharp image is that of a deep bowl with its concave side towards the projector, the position of sharp focus at the edges being as much as 20 inches in front of a screen only 30 inches wide.

Seeing, as becomes a conscientious reviewer, for something to snipe at I have found few targets for my pop-gun. Perhaps the warnings about the inadvisability of storing 16 mm. film in unduly warm conditions need some qualification when addressed to readers who will be working in this country, though they may be appropriate to many other climates.

The diagram of a smoothing system on page 281 seems to include a loop (numbered "7") in a position which would prevent it from taking any part in proceedings. On page 247, table 5, "Method 1" seems to have got accidentally repeated and described again as "Method 7."

But I would like to end on a note of unqualified praise for this industrious, ingenious and useful work.

# **THE CINEMA, by Stanley Reed. (E.S.A., 5/6)**

*Reviewed by E. Francis Mills*

This book is one of a series called *How Things Developed*, and is intended primarily for the use of children in the school library and classroom. Having tried it out, I am confident that most children from eleven upwards will read it with pleasure and profit.

The publishers are to be congratulated not only for realising that such a book is needed, but for its 122 pages of clear type, and its multiplicity of half-tone and line drawings attractively laid out in a manner as unlike the traditional school text as are its contents. There have been other books for children about the cinema, but this is written by someone who knows his public as thoroughly as his subject, and whose style is lucid without being condescending. It is not difficult to collect plenty of interesting material about the cinema; it is another matter to select, order and present it so effectively.

The book describes the development of the cinema in the form of a story enlivened by many anecdotes and made real by plentiful illustrations, closely knit with the text. No normal child can resist a well told story. This is not, however, a straight chronological tale; the main lines of the cinema's development are constantly clarified by a number of subsidiary stories which, illuminating a particular perspective, send us back and then project us forward into the main story again. An excellent example of this is the chapter dealing with the film studio, which gives on each of 10 consecutive pages a picture and a series of interesting details of an actual studio, from Edison's "Black Maria" to a modern one.

An adult examining the book might well question whether it is too much concerned with the bare facts and practical details, and too little with films and the art of the cinema. But the author has chosen his line, and—judged by the test of some children's reactions—it seems to be the right one for a "first" book. Indeed, the occasional attempts to introduce technical or stylistic principles provide the only blemishes. For example, huddled along the edge of page 42 are four diminutive but very complex photographs illustrating camera movements, the details of which could only be made out by the initiated looking through a magnifying glass with the eye of faith. They are not related to the story, which continues pleasantly down the same page. These aspects should either have been treated fully or, preferably, left to a "second" book, with a different approach.



## THE SOUND TRACK

The sound track of the M.G.M. musical *Singin' in the Rain* is represented by ten sides of direct quotations in the gramophone catalogue (M.G.M. 490-494). Whatever standards may apply to the visuals, there has been no attempt at all to follow the early talkie period in the arrangement or orchestration of the music; to anyone unfamiliar with the dates of the original songs, these tracks would sound precisely the same as any other contemporary M.G.M. musical. The singing strings, the brass phrases, the accents of the percussion and other devices of the orchestra had no place in the music of the late 1920's. Fortunately, a consistency of approach in the work of Brown and Freed makes the transition acceptable.

The title tune, *Singin' in the Rain*, begins with one of those characteristically-casual introductions by Gene Kelly as he quietly hums the melody against a little "rainfall" rhythmic phrase that later dominates the orchestration. There is a full statement of the song, some high-powered dance-orchestration and, finally, a return to the quieter mood and the original setting. *All I Do is Dream of You* is an example of an old song with the slick, modern orchestration; Kelly sings it extremely well. *Make 'Em Laugh*, a Donald O'Connor number, is a vulgar re-hash of *Be a Clown* from Gene Kelly's *The Pirate*. *Moses Supposes* starts with a chant of the tongue-twister, which is taken up by the orchestra; a gag cantata effect is spoiled by bad balance between the two voices, and the recording becomes happier when the tap-dancing begins.

Gene Kelly's attempt to dominate all fields of this type of musical work is largely successful, but he overstates his welcome occasionally, particularly in certain kinds of romantic song. A case in point is the *Lucky Star* number. His voice is poor and out of balance with the orchestra; a heavenly choir does its best to save the situation at the end. *You Were Meant For Me*, another Kelly solo, is much better. *Good Morning* makes a very attractive recording; the material is lively and full of variations. There is a hula-hula insert, good vocal cutting between Kelly, O'Connor and Debbie Reynolds, and useful material is derived from the interpretations in various languages. Two fragments on Side 8 are as interesting as any of the featured numbers in this set. A reprise of *All I Do is Dream of You* takes us as near to period style as we come; it is a chorus version, offset by percussion effects and accentuated beats. A snippet of the tune *Fit as a Fiddle* contains a masterly balance between voice and solo fiddle.

*Broadway Ballet* is divided into two extracts. The first is based on the original tunes of *Broadway Melody* and *Broadway Rhythm*; both have strong reminiscence value and Kelly sings them well. The second quotation is an orchestral one, starting with some pleasant woodwind sounds and ending with a series of trumpet breaks in the *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue* style.

These sound-track extracts are well-selected and the set is worth buying, particularly Nos. 493 and 494. Surfaces are reasonable and there is less evidence of over-modulation than in other recent M.G.M. issues.

JOHN HUNTLEY.

## CORRESPONDENCE

F. Scott Fitzgerald

*The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND*

Sir,—As an ardent, though critical, admirer of F. Scott Fitzgerald I would like to express my appreciation of *Visits to Babylon*, in which Penelope Houston puts up a very good case for the serious novelist whose talent Hollywood buys only to squander. But there are a few points of detail which seem to have been overlooked. Considering Fitzgerald's major works, for example, I think that only *The Great Gatsby*, with its fine visual images, economy of style, and severe sense of form, has real and distinct filmic possibilities. Of *Tender is the Night* Miss Houston wrote that it is "almost untranslatable", and I fully agree; but this remark also applies to *This Side of Paradise* and, though to a lesser extent, to *The Beautiful and Damned*. Both are rather shapeless and untidily written, full of dialogue devoted largely to self-analysis, and contain characters who, though far from dull, seem difficult to depict in visual terms; it appears likely that the amount of treatment necessary would be too great to justify the filming of either of these stories today, though *The Beautiful and Damned* did reach the screen once—in 1922. *The Last Tycoon*, although unfinished, has more to commend it, assuming that it could be completed as conceived by Fitzgerald himself in his notes and general outline published along with the roughly finished fragment. But this is one view of Hollywood that the movie moguls prefer to leave alone, doubtless protesting that their audiences wouldn't understand it!

Fitzgerald's short stories, on the other hand, are quite a different matter, and many appear to me to be highly suitable for film treatment, excepting, of course, items like *The Cut-Glass Bowl* and other intracables. This, I think, should have been emphasised more strongly. As to Fitzgerald's own writing for the films the bitter tragedy was, as Miss Houston said, that Hollywood used him "as an odd job man". She might with advantage have cited Arthur Mizener's example of Fitzgerald's worth as a screen writer: his script of *Cosmopolitan*, written in 1940 but shelved, was brought out seven years later and given to a writer for revision. The writer paid it the tribute of being "the most perfect motion picture scenario I ever read" and couldn't see why revision was necessary. But, in fairness to Hollywood, I would like to offer the opinion that the younger Fitzgerald, despite what Miss Houston calls his "strong visual sense, superb dialogue and undoubted interest in the mechanics of the film", would not have readily accepted the

(EDINBURGH FESTIVAL continued from page 5)

A practical step towards the clarification of this issue is an important conference on the principles of Sponsorship which is being organised to take place during this year's Festival. This gathering will discuss the fundamental considerations which govern the production of sponsored films by governments, industrial organisations, and public bodies. Among leading publicists and film-makers who have been invited to take part in the discussion are J. H. Brebner, Henri Claudel, John Grierson, Lex Hornsby, Stuart Legg, N. R. A. Vroom and Basil Wright. A special session, which may well prove the most evocative, will be devoted to the sponsor and the creative artist.

The conference of film educationists, now established as one of the regular by-products of the Festival, will be devoted this year to the place of the film in Further Education, with special emphasis on the use of films for technical training.

Another interesting development this year is the Film School which is being organised by the British Film Institute and the Scottish Film Council. The first part of the course, to be held in Glasgow during the week prior to the Festival, will be devoted to Film Appreciation. The second part, to be held in Edinburgh during the first week of the Festival, will deal with practical aspects of Film Technique and will include lectures by John Grierson, Dilys Powell and Max Ophuls.

The Film Festival is held concurrently with the International Festival of Music and Drama, and extends over three weeks—from August 17 to September 7. A total of forty-five performances

will include special programmes of educational and scientific films for children. As far as possible, programmes will be repeated in the second half of the Festival so that visitors not staying the whole period may have an opportunity of seeing most of the films presented. This year's "retrospective" programme will be devoted to films which have contributed to the development of French documentary.

Though there is no parade of stars at the Festival, Edinburgh has become an annual centre for creative film-makers from all over the world. And there is, of course, glamour of a different sort in the background of Edinburgh itself, in the nightly Tattoos on the Castle Esplanade, and in the whole atmosphere of the Festival with its international opera, ballet and orchestral concerts.

For the visitor mainly interested in the cinema, undoubtedly one of the most interesting places during the Festival is the little bar at the Film Club. This is the spot where all the film people meet, and the scene of endless and lively discussions.

But of course it is the films themselves that cause the talk. What will they be this year? In which will be found the sought-for revelation? At the moment of writing the entries are flooding in, and there is much of promise, but scores of entries have still to be sifted and screened. The task of viewing and selection and programme building is a long one and it will not be possible to announce details of the performances much before the start of the Festival, but an advance prospectus may be obtained from Film House, 6/8, Hill Street, Edinburgh, 2.



suggestion that he could be taught anything of writing. By this I mean that scripting is a fairly specialised technique and has to be learned; it seems to me that this Fitzgerald was not prepared to do—at least in the earlier days—and when he finally buckled to and mastered the new art it was then too late, for he was a dying man.

Finally, my cast (contemporary) of *The Great Gatsby*: Gatsby, Montgomery Clift; Carraway, Arthur Kennedy; Daisy, Anne Baxter; Tom, Robert Ryan; Myrtle Wilson, Judy Holliday; Jordan Baker, Joan Fontaine; Wilson, Howard da Silva (a la Paramount).

PATRICK MOXEY.

24, Queen's Road, Tankerton, Kent.

### Crown Film Unit

*The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND*

Sir,—In the April-June issue of SIGHT AND SOUND John Grierson slaps the wrists of the Crown Film Unit and benignly absolves the Government from any blame in disbanding it. But then his imagination starts to run away with the opportunity which seems wide open. Let us, he says "devote some public money every year to making film poetry about Britain". Phew!—Or am I a Moron? ... He goes on, "the only—and traditionally English—guarantee of this is to put the policy job in the hands of two or three imaginatively generous people who have the wit to know what it means," and, "I see nothing . . . to prevent my simple and competitively modest solution."

Apart from this last optical burst of ego, his is a begging scheme for the getting together of another "family" group with no constructive offering to the film industry as a whole.

If "film poetry about Britain" is to be made it will find itself as our greatest poets found themselves. They were not organised. You do not create or build poets on charity, and Carol Reed, John Huston, Capra, and other leading film directors were not brought up on such milk.

Grierson would also enjoin a Secretary, and Accountant with Secretary, to proceed . . . "to secure the making of at least half-a-dozen documentary films a year—in the best tradition"! . . . I have never read such anxious nonsense.

His next somewhat ambiguous suggestion is "let the good established units under this aegis make one or two apiece", seemingly losing all sense of proportion in reading his own wordage.

In the next breath he says "let the organization start with a Circuit tie-up". Has Grierson never heard of "Box Office"? Film poetry about Britain won't pull them in, we're not that kind of people, whether we care to admit it or not. Ask the Rank Organisation or the smallest Independent.

And Grierson proposes asking finance to put up twenty-five or thirty thousand pounds and "Let the seniors amongst us find the outside money" . . . "what we did successfully . . . we ought with our greater experience now, be able to do again". This calls for no comment but silent wonder and conjecture.

Healthy, keen and fair competition will do more good for the film industry than subsidies or Sugar Daddies ever did.

His suggestion of setting up an organisation under sponsorship is bad. Grierson should forget "groups". If he wants to do the Industry as a whole some good, he should help to put it on a basis with all other Industries which operate on practical and sound business lines.

Yours truly,

Hartley-Ward Studios Ltd.,  
3 Albemarle Street, Piccadilly, W.1.

B. CHARLES-DEAN.

### Critics Choice

*The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND*

Sir,—It is generally pleasant to get something for nothing. I must confess, however, that my gratification at receiving out of the blue a copy of the Film Institute's new publication, "Critics' Choice," was short-lived. What, to put it bluntly, is the Institute up to? In a get-up reminiscent of the style now generally adopted for brochures advertising the sale of pressure-cookers or long-playing gramophone records, "Critics' Choice" presents comments on a selection of current films by surely the strangest collection of "critics" ever to be jostled into a single column. The editor of "Picturegoer" on *A Streetcar Named Desire* ("Elevating as an old sock . . ."); the "Kine Weekly" reviewer on *Viva Zapata* ("Thrill-packed masterpiece . . . Outstanding box-office proposition"); "The Sunday Chronicle" on Marlon Brando ("Surly, sulky, sultry . . ."); "The Sunday Times" on *Angels One Five* (" . . . a

simplicity and a lack of affectation which are heartrending"). Is it really the function of the Film Institute to propagate critical comment on this level? "A field day for vulgarians" is how its own critics (in space provided, ironically enough, by the free enterprise of Better Books Ltd.) describe *The Greatest Show on Earth* in "Sight and Sound." Yet this film turns up as Critics' Choice number five for the month ("Cecil B. DeMille is the screen's peerless purveyor of money-spinning hokum").

One can guess the arguments by which its sponsors would support this kind of publication: "Get them interested—Don't frighten them off by being too highbrow—work up from the mediocre to the good." These are the most pernicious of contemporary cultural fallacies. No one in the world needs critical guidance on whether to go to *The Greatest Show on Earth*; nor do the "threads of philosophy" (to quote from the editor of "Critics' Choice") drawn by Miss Powell and Mr. Chappel! "from DeMille's multi-coloured skein" justify the expenditure of a whole page on such a film, while *Rashomon* is tucked away in a single paragraph at the back, under the heading "Without Trumpets."

I suggest that it is the function of the Film Institute in its publications to trumpet films like *Rashomon*, and to award a different sort of accolade to the second-, third-, and fourth-rate. The slick, meretricious get-up of "Critics' Choice" is all too indicative of its cultural level.

Yours etc.,

JOHN FLETCHER.

62, Palace Road,  
East Molesey, Surrey.

(This letter is referred to on page 2.)

### Brandy for the Parson

*The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND*

Sir,—In a review of the film *Brandy for the Parson*, appearing in the current issue of SIGHT AND SOUND you have inadvertently erred on two points of credit, which I beg leave to correct. The screenplay from Geoffrey Household's original story was written by Walter Meade and John Dighton (not Geoffrey Orme as you state). Secondly, the film was produced by myself. Mr. John Grierson is the Executive Producer in charge of Group Three with a supervisory role over the entire output of Southall Studios and not creatively concerned with any one picture.

Were your magazine not so habitually accurate and well-informed on all matters relating to British Film Production and, as such, the journalistic authority on the serious cinema, I would hesitate to draw your attention to a pair of minor inaccuracies such as these.

Perhaps you will find space in your columns to correct the erratum and oblige a sensitive correspondent and reader.

Your Obedient Servant, etc., etc.,

ALFRED SHAUGHNESSY.

10, Chesham Street, S.W.1.

### Federation of Film Societies

*The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND*

Sir,—We wish to clear up any misunderstanding which may have arisen in the matter of the grant of £690 to the Federation of Film Societies charged in the last Income and Expenditure Account of the British Film Institute.

This sum was not freely granted without conditions and in fact it was immediately repaid in full to the British Film Institute by the Federation, as the Federation's contribution to the loss sustained on the Central Booking Agency of the British Film Institute, and no part of it was available to the Federation of Film Societies for their own use in financing other activities.

The misunderstanding appears to have arisen through the assumption that grants-in-aid given by the Institute are necessarily given for free spending which is not always so. In this case the Institute by showing £690 as a grant-in-aid to the Federation was giving public expression to the fact that it had devoted this sum to the Central Booking Agency which was administered by the Institute primarily for the use of film societies.

In view of questions which have been asked and any wrongful deductions which may have been drawn we seek to make the matter quite clear by publishing this letter.

Yours faithfully,

For and on behalf of  
The British Film Institute,  
R. S. CAMPLIN,  
Secretary.

For and on behalf of  
the Federation of British Film Societies,  
J. HARVEY LANGLEY,  
Treasurer.



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world (which might be surprisingly edifying).

The change must surely continue and accelerate because, though part of it is coming from inside ourselves, a greater part is occurring through the onset of outside forces beyond our control. The hole-plugging on the part of successive administrations will presumably accelerate too, if only because of the nature of politics; but the time will come (in certain spheres it has come already) when the holes will appear faster than they can be stopped.

Except in extreme and palpable emergency, democratic authority can seldom act in a fundamental and overall manner without the clearest sanction to do so. It is at least possible that documentary played some part in the '30's in creating the sanctions which brought about the reforms

we have seen in the last few years. Perhaps it now has to contribute to the creation of a more important and more difficult set of sanctions; for the themes of change which it ought now to grasp are inevitably those that descend to the deepest roots of national living and thinking.

Yet we might be surprised at how welcome—in the long run—would be a real grappling with the great question of Britain's future. And so far there has been little sign that leadership in such a task would be very eagerly disputed. In any case, if it were said of documentary in future time that it had the savvy to foresee the real scale of approaching change, and the guts to advocate (however naively) the building of a new ship rather than the vain caulking of the old—it might, in due course, have its reward.

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(KRAMER & COMPANY continued from page 23)

ways: to please the serious audience without sacrificing the qualities that supposedly make for entertainment value.

Kramer announces new projects at such a rate as to suggest that he will make the thirty pictures in less than five years. Already finished are *The Fourposter*, directed by Irving Reis, scripted by Allan Scott from the two-character play by Jan de Hartog, and starring Rex Harrison and Lilli Palmer; *The Happy Time*, directed by Richard Fleischer (whom Kramer has under contract) from the comedy about a French Canadian family, recently seen in London, with Charles Boyer and Louis Jourdan, and *The Sniper*, directed by Edward Dmytryk from a script by Stanley Roberts and a story by Edward and Edna Anhalt, who wrote *Panic in the Streets*. The Anhalts are associate producers of this film and of *My Six Convicts*; it is in this capacity that Kramer likes to bring "creative people" into his organisation. *The Sniper*, the story of a sex killer who hunts his victims with a carbine, has apparently been made with sympathy and without sensationalism; it has been banned by the British censor. Nearing completion are the intriguingly titled *The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T*, a technicolor musical fantasy showing "the world as a small boy sees it at a moment of extreme revolt", written by "Dr. Seuss" (Ted Geisel) author of *Gerald McBoing-Boing*; and *The Dirty Dozen*, a war story based on Harry Brown's *A Sound of Hunting* and directed by Dmytryk.

Kramer's plans show a similar mixture of original stories and successful plays and novels. Among them are *The Right Size of Me*, the true story of a clergyman and his wife who adopted children of nine different nationalities; the Carson McMullers' novel and play *The Member of the Wedding* with the Broadway cast (Ethel Waters, Julie Harris, Brandon de Wilde) directed by Zinnemann; *The Cyclists Raid* (Benedek, script by John Paxton), the story of a gang of adolescents who wreck a town; Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny*, the U.S. Navy having withdrawn its objections to this wartime sea story; *The Library*, with Mary Pickford; Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*; *The Juggler*, to be made in Israel by the novelist and screen writer Michael Blankfort; *The Comedian*, the

story of a television comedian adored by his audience and hated by his family, and *The Roosevelt Story*, Mrs. Roosevelt having selected Kramer as the producer she would like for the job.

On paper, these plans compare very favourably with anything that any major studio has to offer, and Kramer, unlike some producers, does not seem to leave his projects for years on paper. His organisation, which has grown in his first year at Columbia from nineteen to thirty-six, will no doubt expand further, and he seems already to have modified his original intention of doing without stars. He has yet to make a star actress, but Kirk Douglas, the stage actors Marlon Brando and Jose Ferrer, and Arthur Franz make an impressive list of "discoveries". Kramer says that he does not make "message pictures" but that, in considering a story "I try to visualise it in what I call its frame of importance, to evaluate its prime ingredients and plan how best to arrange and handle them so they will yield the best result. The writing, casting and selection of director come afterward, and all become integral parts of a rounded whole". He has undoubted flair both for choosing the off-beat type of story and for finding and developing talent; Fred Zinnemann, for instance, seems to fit more easily into his organisation than into that of a major studio; Laslo Benedek, the newcomer Michael Blankfort, Richard Fleischer, promoted from "B" pictures, and the variable Edward Dmytryk all seem worth watching.

Kramer, though he has made disappointing films, has yet to make an uninteresting one; to date, in spite of the fact, neither deniable nor particularly disheartening, that the least satisfactory films from the critical point of view have been the most successful at the box-office, he has shown considerable faith in his public's intelligence. And the first need, after all, is to show a profit. A producer is as good as the stories he chooses and the people he entrusts with making them; Stanley Kramer, whatever reservations one has about specific films, has established in four years, and at the age of thirty-nine, a claim to be considered the most enterprising producer in Hollywood today.



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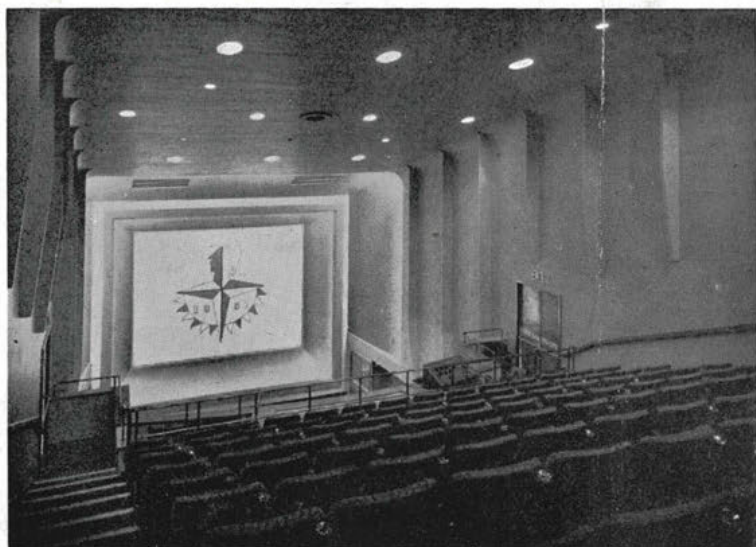
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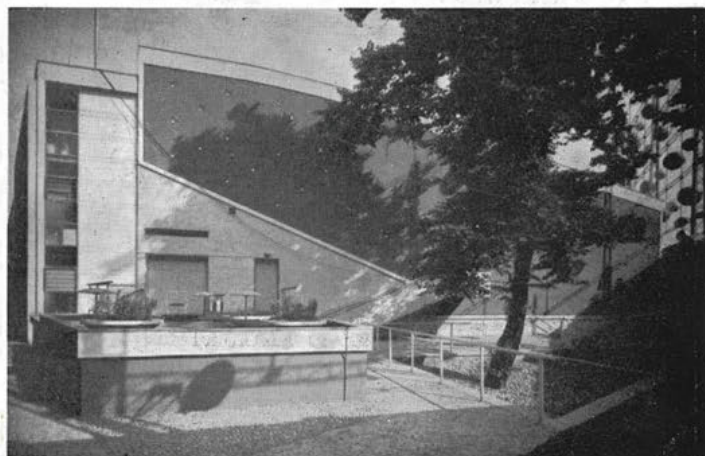
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